



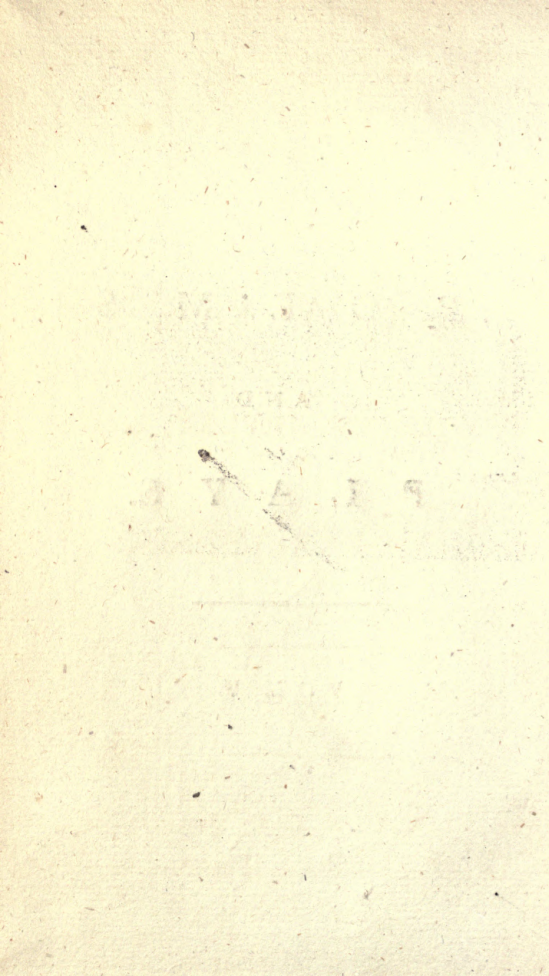


P O E M S

A N D

P L A Y S.

V O L. V.



P O E M S

AND

P L A Y S,

By WILLIAM HAYLEY, Esq.

IN SIX VOLUMES.

VOL. V.

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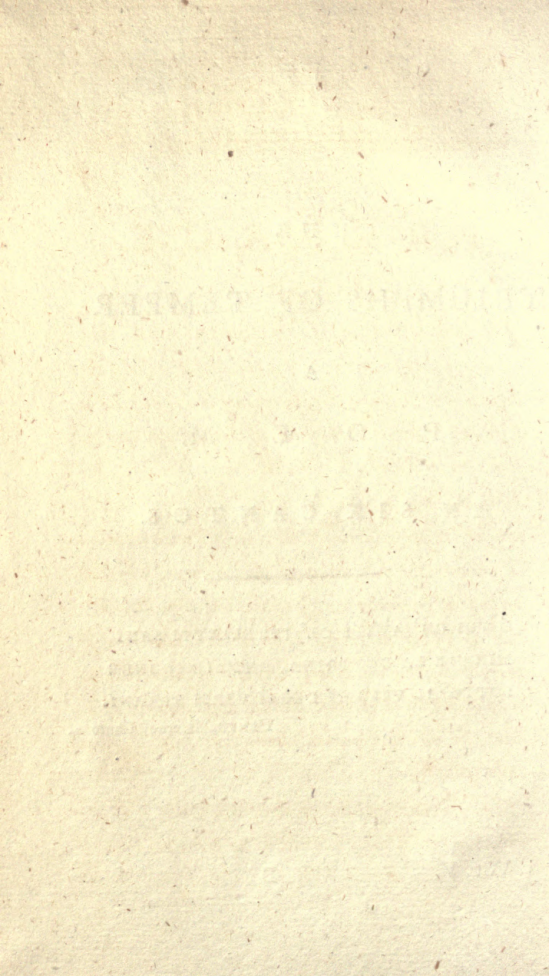
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THE
TRIUMPHS OF TEMPER
A
P O E M.
IN SIX CANTOS.

O VOI CH' AVETE GL' INTELLETTI SANI
MIRATE LA DOTTRINA, CHE SI ASCONDE
SOTTO' IL VELAME DEGLI VERSI STRANI.

DANTE, Inferno, Canto 9.



P R E F A C E.

*I*T seems to be a kind of duty incumbent on those who devote themselves to Poetry, to raise, if possible, the dignity of a declining Art, by making it as beneficial to Life and Manners as the limits of Composition, and the character of modern Times will allow: The ages, indeed, are past, in which the song of the Poet was idolized for its miraculous effects; yet a Poem, intended to promote the cultivation of good-humour, may still perhaps be fortunate enough to prove of some little service to society in general; or, if this idea may be thought too chimerical and romantic by sober Reason, it is at least one of those pleasing and innocent delusions, in which a poetical Enthusiast may be safely indulged.

The following production owes its existence to an incident in real life, very similar to the principal action of

the last Canto ; but in forming the general plan of the work, it seemed to me absolutely necessary to introduce both the agency and the abode of SPLEEN, notwithstanding the difficulty and the hazard of attempting a subject so happily executed by the masterly pencil of Pope. I considered his Cave of Spleen as a most exquisite cabinet picture ; and, to avoid the servility of imitation, I determined to sketch the mansion of this gloomy Power on a much wider canvass : Happy, indeed, if the judgment of the Public may enable me to exclaim, with the honest vanity of the Painter, who compared his own works to the divine productions of Raphael,

“ *E son Pittore anch’ Io !*”

The celebrated Alessandro Tassoni, who is generally considered as the inventor of the modern Heroi-comic Poetry, was so proud of having extended the limits of his art by a new kind of composition, that he not only spoke of it with infinite exultation in one of his private letters, but even gave a MS. copy of his work to his native city of Modena, with an inscription, in which he stiled it a new species of Poetry, invented by himself.

A few

A few partial friends have asserted, that the present performance has some degree of similar merit ; but as I apprehend all the novelty it possesses, may rather require an apology, than entitle its Author to challenge commendation, I shall explain how far the conduct of the Poem differs from the most approved models in this mode of writing, and slightly mention the poetical effects, which such a variation appeared likely to produce.

*It is well known, that the favourite Poems, which blend the serious and the comic, represent their principal characters in a satirical point of view : It was the intention of Tassoni (though prudence made him attempt to conceal it) to satirize a particular Italian Nobleman, who happened to be the object of his resentment. Boileau openly ridicules the French Ecclesiastics in his *Lutrin* ; Garth, our English Physicians, in his *Dispensary* ; and the Rape of the Lock itself, that most excellent and enchanting Poem, which I never contemplate but with new idolatry, is denominated the best Satire extant, by the learned Dr. Warton, in his very elegant and ingenious, but severe Essay on Pope : A sentence which seems to be confirmed by the Poet himself, in his letter to Mrs. Fermor, where he says, “ the cha-*

“ *rafter of Belinda, as it is now managed, resembles*
“ *you in nothing but in beauty.*” Though I think, that
no composition can surpass, or perhaps ever equal this
most happy effort of Genius, as a sportive Satire, I ima-
gined it might be possible to give a new Character to this
mixed species of Poetry, and to render it by its Object,
though not in its Execution, more noble than the most
beautiful and refined Satire can be. We have seen it
carried to inimitable perfection, in the most delicate
raillery on Female Foibles :—It remained to be tried, if
it might not also aspire to delineate the more engaging
features of Female Excellence. The idea appeared to
me worth the experiment ; for, if it succeeded, it seemed
to promise a double advantage ; first, it would give an
air of novelty to the Poem ; and, secondly, what I
thought of much greater importance, it would render it
more interesting to the heart. On these principles, I
have endeavoured to paint SERENA as a most lovely, en-
gaging, and accomplished character ; yet I hope the co-
louring is so faithfully copied from general Nature,
that every man, who reads the Poem, may be happy
enough to know many Fair ones, who resemble my
Heroine.

There

*There is another point, in which I have also attempted to give this Poem an air of novelty : I mean, the manner of connecting the real and the visionary scenes, which compose it ; by shifting these in alternate Cantos, I hoped to make familiar Incident and allegorical Picture afford a strong relief to each other, and keep the attention of the Reader alive, by an appearance particularly diversified. I wished, indeed (but I fear most ineffectually) for powers to unite some touches of the sportive wildness of Ariosto, and the more serious sublime painting of Dante, with some portion of the enchanting elegance, the refined imagination, and the moral graces of Pope ; and to do this, if possible, without violating those rules of propriety, which Mr. Cambridge has illustrated, by example as well as precept, in *The Scribleriad*, and in his sensible Preface to that elegant and learned Poem.*

I have now very frankly informed my Reader of the extent, or rather of the extravagance of my desire ; for I will not give it the serious name of design : They, whom an enlightened taste has rendered thoroughly sensible how very difficult it must be to accomplish such an idea, will not only be the first to discern, but the most

ready to pardon those errors, into which so hazardous an attempt may perhaps have betrayed me. I had thoughts of introducing this performance to the Public, by a Dissertation of considerable length on this species of Poetry; but I forbear to indulge myself any farther in such preliminary remarks, as the anxiety of authors is so apt to produce, from the reflection, that, however ingeniously written, they add little or nothing to the success of a good Poem, and are utterly insufficient to prevent that neglect, or oblivion, which is the inevitable fate of a bad one.

In dismissing a work to my Fair Readers, which is intended principally for their perusal, I shall only recommend it to their attention; and bid them farewell, in the words of the pleasant and courteous Tassoni—

“ Vaglia il buon voler, s’ altro non lice,

“ E chi la leggera, viva felice !”

EARTHAM,
JAN. 31, 1781.

THE

T H E

T R I U M P H S

O F

T E M P E R.

C A N T O I.

THE Mind's soft Guardian, who, tho' yet unsung,
Inspires with harmony the Female tongue,
And gives, improving every tender grace,
The smile of angels to a mortal face ;
Her powers I sing ; and scenes of mental strife, . 5
Which form the maiden for th' accomplish'd wife ;
Where the sweet victor sees, with sparkling eyes,
Love her reward, and Happiness her prize.

Daughters

Daughters of Beauty, who the song inspire,
 To your enchanting notes attune my lyre ! 10
 And O ! if haply your soft hearts may gain
 Or use, or pleasure from the motley strain,
 Tho' formal critics, with a furlly frown,
 Deny your artless Bard the laurel crown,
 He still shall triumph, if ye deign to spread 15
 Your sweeter myrtle round his honour'd head.

In your bright circle young SERENA grew ;
 A lovelier nymph the pencil never drew ;
 For the fond Graces form'd her easy mien,
 And Heaven's soft azure in her eye was seen. 20
 She seem'd a rose-bud, when it first receives
 The genial sun in its expanding leaves :
 For now she enter'd those important years,
 When the full bosom swells with hopes and fears ;
 When conscious Nature prompts the secret sigh,
 And sheds sweet languor o'er the melting eye ; 26
 When nobler toys the female heart trepan,
 And Dolls rejected, yield their place to Man.

Beneath a Father's care SERENA grew ;
 The good SIR GILBERT, to his country true, 30
 A faithful

A faithful Whig, who, zealous for the state,
 In Freedom's service led the loud debate ;
 Yet every day, by transmutation rare,
 Turn'd to a Tory in his elbow-chair,
 And made his daughter pay, howe'er absurd, 35
 Passive obedience to his sovereign word.

In his domestic sway he borrow'd aid
 From prim PENELOPE, an ancient maid,
 His upright Sister, conscious of her worth,
 Who valued still her beauty, and her birth ; 40
 Tho' from her birth no envied rank she gain'd,
 And of her beauty but the ghost remain'd ;
 A restless ghost ! that with remembrance keen
 Proclaim'd incessant what it once had been ;
 Delighted still the steps of youth to haunt, 45
 To watch the tender nymph, and warm gallant ;
 And, with an eye that petrified pursuit,
 Hang like the dragon o'er th' Hesperian fruit.

Tho' strictly guarded by this jealous power,
 The mild SERENA no restraint could sour : 50
 Pure was her bosom, as the silver lake,
 Ere rising winds the ruffled water shake,

When

When the bright pageants of the morning sky,
 Across th' expansive mirror lightly fly,
 By vernal gales in quick succession driven, 55
 While the clear glass reflects the smile of heaven.
 In gay content a sportive life she led,
 The child of Modesty, by Virtue bred :
 Her light companions Innocence and Ease :
 Her hope was Pleasure, and her wish to please : 60
 For this to Fashion early rites she paid :
 For this to Venus secret vows she made ;
 Nor held it sin to cast a private glance
 O'er the dear pages of a new romance,
 Eager in Fiction's touching scenes to find 65
 A field, to exercise her youthful mind :
 The touching scenes new energy imprest
 On all the virtues of her feeling breast.
 Sweet Evelina's fascinating power
 Had first beguil'd of sleep her midnight hour : 70
 Possess'd by Sympathy's enchanting sway,
 She read, unconscious of the dawning day.
 The Modern Anecdote was next convey'd
 Beneath her pillow by her faithful maid.

THE TRIUMPHS OF TEMPER. 13

The nymph, attentive as the brooding dove, 75

Pored o'er the tender scenes of Franzel's love :

The sinking taper now grew weak and pale ;

SERENA sigh'd, and dropt th' unfinish'd tale ;

But, as warm clouds in vernal æther roll,

The soft ideas floated in her soul : 80

Free from ambitious pride, and envious care,

To love, and to be lov'd, was all her prayer :

While these fond thoughts her gentle mind possess'd,

Soft slumber settled on her snowy breast.

Scarce had her radiant eyes began to close, 85

When to her view a friendly vision rose :

A fairy Phantom struck her mental sight,

Light as the gossamer, as æther bright ;

Array'd like Pallas was the pigmy form,

When the sage Goddess stills the martial storm. 90

Her casque was amber, richly grac'd above

With down, collected from the callow dove :

Her burnish'd breast-plate, of a deeper dye,

Was once the armour of a golden fly :

A lynx's eye her little ægis shone, 95

By fairy spells converted into stone,

And

14 THE TRIUMPHS OF TEMPER.

And worn of old, as elfin poets sing,
 By Ægypt's lovely queen, a favourite ring :
 Mysterious power was in the magic toy,
 To turn the frowns of care to smiles of joy. 100
 Her tiny lance, whose radiance stream'd afar,
 Was one bright sparkle from the bridal star.
 A filmy mantle round her figure play'd,
 Fine as the texture, by Arachne laid
 O'er some young plant, when glittering to the view
 With many an orient pearl of morning dew. 106
 The Phantom hover'd o'er the conscious Fair
 With such a lively smile of tender care,
 As on her elfin lord Titania cast,
 When first she found his angry spell was past. 110
 Round her rich locks SERENA chanc'd to tie
 An ample ribband of cærulean dye :
 High o'er her forehead rose the graceful bow,
 Whose arch commanded the sweet scene below :
 The hovering Spirit view'd the tempting spot, 115
 And lightly perch'd on this unbending knot ;
 As the fair flutterer, of Psyche's race,
 Is seen to terminate her airy chace,

When, pleas'd at length her quivering wings to close,
Fondly she settles on the fragrant rose. 120

Now in soft notes, more musically clear
Than ever Fairy breath'd in mortal ear,
These words the visionary voice convey'd
To the charm'd spirit of the sleeping maid :

“ Thou darling of my care, whose ripen'd worth
Shall spread my empire o'er the smiling earth ; 126
Whom Nature blest, forbidding modish Art
To cramp thy spirit, or contract thy heart ;
Screen'd from thy thought, nor in thy visions felt,
Long on thy opening mind I've fondly dwelt ; 130
In childhood's sorrows brought thee quick relief,
And dry'd thy April showers of infant grief ;
Taught thee to laugh at the malicious boy,
Who broke thy playthings with a barbarous joy,
To bear what ills the little Female haunt, 135
The testy Nurse, the imperious Governante,
And that tyrannic pest, the prying maiden Aunt. }
Now ripening years a nobler scene supply ;
For life now opens on thy sparkling eye :
Thy rising bosom swells with just desire 140
Rapture to feel, and rapture to inspire :

Not the vain blifs, the tranſitory joys,
 That childiſh Woman feels, in radiant toys;
 The coſtly Diamond, or the lighter Pearl,
 The maſſive Nabob, or the tinfel Earl. 145
 Thy heart demands, each meaner aim above,
 Th' imperiſhable wealth of ſterling love;
 Thy wiſh, to pleaſe by ev'ry ſofter grace
 Of elegance and eaſe, of form and face!
 By lively fancy and by ſenſe refin'd, 150
 The ſtronger magic of the cultur'd mind!
 Thy pure ambition, and thy virtuous plan,
 To fix the variable heart of Man!
 Short is the worſhip paid at Beauty's ſhrine;
 But laſting Love and Happineſs are mine: 155
 Mine, tho' the earth's miſtaken, blinded race
 Deſpiſe my influence, and my name debaſe;
 Nor breathe one vow to that ætherial friend,
 On whom the colours of their life depend.
 But to thy innocence I'll now diſplay 160
 The myſtic marvels of my ſecret ſway;
 And tell, in this thy fate-deciding hour,
 My race, my name, my office, and my power.

Fiſt,

THE TRIUMPHS OF TEMPER. 17

First, hear what wonders human forms contain!
 And learn the texture of the Female brain! 165
 By Nature's care in curious order spread,
 This living net is fram'd of tender thread;
 Fine, as thy hand, some favour'd youth to grace,
 Knits with nice art to form the mimic lace.
 Within the center of this fretted dome, 170
 Her secret tower, her heaven-constructed home,
 Soft Sensibility, sweet Beauty's soul!
 Keeps her coy state, and animates the whole,
 Invisible as Harmony, who springs,
 Wak'd by young Zephyr, from Æolian strings:
 Her subtle power, more delicately fine, 176
 Dwells in each thread, and lives in every line,
 Whose quick vibrations, without end, impart
 Pleasure and pain to the responsive heart.
 As Zephyr's breath the willing chord inspires, 180
 Whispering soft music to the trembling wires,
 So with fond care I regulate, unseen,
 The softer movements of this nice machine;
 TEMPER my earthly name, the nurse of Love!
 But call'd SOPHROSÝNE in realms above! 185

When lovely Woman, perfect at her birth,
 Blest with her early charms the wond'ring earth,
 Her soul, in sweet simplicity array'd,
 Nor shar'd my guidance, nor requir'd my aid.
 Her tender frame, nor confident nor coy, 190
 Had every fibre tun'd to gentle joy :
 No vain caprices swell'd her pouting lip ;
 No gold produc'd a mercenary trip ;
 Soft innocence inspir'd her willing kifs,
 Her love was nature, and her life was bliss. 195
 Guide of his reason, not his passion's prey,
 She tamed the savage, Man, who blest'd her sway.
 No jarring wishes fill'd the world with woes,
 But youth was ecstasy, and age repose.

The Powers of Mischief met, in dark Divan,
 To blast these mighty joys of envied Man : 201
 The Fiends, at their infernal Leader's call,
 Fram'd their base wiles in Demogorgon's hall.
 In the deep center of that dreadful dome,
 An hellish cauldron boil'd with fiery foam : 205
 In this wide urn the circling spirits threw
 Ingredients harsh, and hideous to the view ;

While

While the terrific master of the spell
 With adjurations shook the depths of hell,
 And in dark words, unmeet for mortal ear, 210
 Bade the dire offspring of his art appear.
 Forth from the vase, with fullen murmurs, broke
 A towering mass of pestilential smoke :
 Emerging from this fog of thickest night,
 A Phantom swells, by slow degrees, to fight ; 215
 But ere the view can seize the forming shape,
 From the mock'd eye its lineaments escape :
 It seem'd all passions melted into one,
 Assum'd the face of all, and yet was none :
 Hell stood aghast at its portentous mien, 220
 And shuddering Demons call'd the spectre Spleen.
 Hie thee to earth ! its mighty master cried,
 O'er the vex'd globe in heavy vapours ride !
 Within its center fix thy shadowy throne !
 With shades thy subjects, and that hell thy own !
 Reign there unseen ! but let thy strong controul 226
 Be hourly felt in Woman's wayward soul !
 With darkest poisons from our deep abyss,
 Taint that pure fountain of terrestrial bliss !

Th' enormous Phantom, at this potent sound, 230
 Roll'd forth obedient from the vast profound :
 The quaking Fiends recover'd from their dread,
 And Hell grew lighter, as the monster fled.
 But now round earth the gliding vapours run,
 Blot the rich æther, and eclipse the sun ; 235
 All Nature sickens ; and her fairest flower,
 Enchanting Woman, feels the baneful power :
 As in her soul the clouds of Spleen arise,
 The sprightly essence of her beauty flies :
 In youth's gay prime, in hours with rapture warm,
 Love looks astonish'd on her altering form : 241
 To pleasing frolics, and enchanting wiles,
 Life-darting looks, and soul-subduing smiles,
 Dark whims succeed : thick-coming fancies fret ;
 The sullen passion, and the hasty pet ; 245
 The swelling lip, the tear-distended eye,
 The peevish question, the perverse reply ;
 The moody humour, that, like rain and fire,
 Blends cold disgust with unsubdu'd desire,
 Flies what it loves, and, petulantly coy, 250
 Feigns proud abhorrence of the proffer'd joy :

For

For Nature's artless aim, the wish to please
 By genuine modesty and simple ease,
 Fashion's pert tricks the crowded brain oppress
 With all the poor parade of tawdry dress : 255
 The sickly bosom pants for noise and shew,
 For every bauble, and for every beau ;
 The voice, that Health made harmony, disowns
 That native charm for Languor's mimic tones ;
 And feigns disease, till, feeling what it feigns, 260
 Its fancied maladies are real pains.
 Such, and a thousand still superior woes,
 From Spleen's new empire o'er the earth arose :
 Each simple dictate of the soul forgot,
 Then first was form'd the mercenary plot ; 265
 And Beauty practis'd that pernicious art,
 The art of angling for an old man's heart ;
 Tho' crawling to his bride with tottering knees,
 His words were dotage, and his love disease.
 From sex to sex this base contagion ran, 270
 And Gold grew Beauty in the eyes of Man :
 Courtship was traffic : and the married life
 But one loud jangle of incessant strife.

22 THE TRIUMPHS OF TEMPER.

The gentle Sprite, who, on his radiant car,
 Shines the mild regent of the evening-star, 275
 And joys from thence those genial rays to shed,
 That lead the bridegroom to the nuptial bed,
 While earth's new ills his friendly soul absorb,
 From Cynthia call'd me to his kindred orb ;
 And, eager to redress the woes of Man, 280
 The brilliant Son of Vesper thus began :
 " Thou softest Being of the ætherial kind,
 Be thy benignant cares no more confin'd
 To smooth the ruffled plume of Zephyr's wing,
 To guard from cruel frost the infant spring, 285
 To drive gross atoms from the rays of noon,
 Or chase the halo from the vapourish moon !
 Thy friendly nature will not now deny
 To quit for nobler toils thy native sky ;
 Thou seest how Spleen's infernal vapours roll 290
 Across the sweet serene of Woman's soul ;
 And earth, which darkens as her beauties fade,
 Must grow a second hell without thy aid :
 Take then thy station ! fix thy nobler reign
 O'er those fine chords, that form the Female brain,
 That

That us'd, ere injur'd by the rust of Spleen, 296

To fill with harmony the human scene !

Go ! lest her touch their tender tones destroy,

Teach them to vibrate to thy notes of joy !

Go ! and restore, by stilling mental strife, 300

Health to faint Love, and happiness to Life !”

So spake that friend of Man, who lights above

His heavenly lamp of Hymenæal love :

In his just aim my kindred spirit join'd,

And flew obedient to the charge assign'd. 305

Hence, as the bias sways the unconscious bowl,

I long unseen have sway'd the careless soul ;

Tho' oft I feel my power by Spleen subdu'd,

In the shrill Vixen, and the sullen Prude,

In some fair forms my soft dominion grows, 310

Like fragrance, rising from the opening rose :

Still I preserve, in many a lovely face,

That gay good-humour, and that constant grace,

Which heavenly Powers united to unfold

In perfect Woman's new-created mould ; 315

When Nature, in her infant beauty blest,

The last and loveliest of her works carest.

But of those Nymphs, who, delicately fair,
 Draw their soft graces from my forming care,
 My young SERENA shines her peers above, 320
 Pride of my hopes, and darling of my love.
 Hence I to thee such mysteries unfold,
 As Man's pedantic eye shall ne'er behold ;
 Whose narrow science, tho' it proudly boast
 To pierce the sky, and count the starry host, 325
 Sees not the lucid band of airy Powers,
 Who flutter round him in his secret hours :
 But if to me, thy guardian now display'd,
 Thy duteous orisons are justly paid,
 Thou to those realms shalt pass, with me thy guide,
 Where Spleen's pale victims, after death, reside ; 331
 Then to that orb, in vision shalt thou rise,
 Unseen by mortal astronomic eyes,
 Where I—but first let me thy soul prepare
 To meet our secret foe's insidious snare ! 335
 'Tis my fond purpose in thy form to shew
 The sweetest model of my skill below :
 A Youth I destine to thy dear embrace,
 Crown'd with each mental charm, and manly grace,
 With

With whom thy innocence, secure from strife, 340
 Shall reap the beauteous joys of blameless life.

Pleas'd I observe thy little heart begin

To ask, what charms the mighty prize may win :

But know, tho' Elegance herself be seen

To guide thy motion, and to form thy mien ; 345

Tho' Beauty o'er thy filial cheek diffuse

The soft enchantment of her roseate hues,

Not from their favour shall this glory rise !

TEMPER shall singly gain the splendid prize :

The sudden conquest shall be mine alone, 350

And Love with transport shall my triumph own.

Such are my hopes ; but I with pain relate

What hard conditions are annex'd by Fate :

As chemic fires, that patient labour blows,

Draw the rich perfume from the Persian rose, 355

So must thou form, by fiery toils refin'd,

The living essence of thy sweeter mind.

Dimly I see, on Destiny's dull glass,

Three dangerous trials 'tis thy doom to pass ;

And oh ! if once forgetful of my power, 360

Good-humour fail thee in the fatal hour,

Farewell

26 THE TRIUMPHS OF TEMPER.

Farewell those joys, that wait the happy wife !

Farewell the vision of unclouded life !

Fain would my love thy secret perils shew,

Which Fate allows not even me to know : 365

In Spleen's dark court a thousand agents dwell,

Who bind her victims in the wayward spell ;

Perchance three prime supporters of her sway,

The busiest of her Fiends, may cross thy way :

Stern Contradiction, her ill-favour'd child, 370

Of fierce demeanor, and of spirit wild,

Bane of delight ! and horror of the sex !

His plan to puzzle, and his pride to vex !—

Or Scandal, filthy hag ! who blindly limps

Round the wide earth, supported by her Imps, 375

Her inky Demons, who delight to print

Her base suggestion, and her envious hint :—

Or groundless Jealousy, pert changeling ! born

Of amorous Vanity, and angry Scorn,

Whose bitter taunts with public insult dare 380

Basely to wound the unoffending Fair,

Proud the sweet joys of Innocence to crush,

And spread o'er Beauty's cheek the burning blush.

Whether these kindred Fiends, or one or all,
 Shall aim thy airy spirit to enthrall, 385
 Are points, my fondness tries in vain to reach ;
 But trust my caution ! and beware of each !

Lest to thy lively mind my words may seem
 The vain chimera of a common dream,
 By one unquestionable sign be taught 390
 To prize my presence in thy waking thought !
 An azure ribband, on thy toilet thrown,
 Shall make the magic of my empire known :
 On this thy sportive needle tried its powers,
 And silver spangles form'd the mimic flowers ; 395
 On these my love shall breathe a secret charm ;
 With this, my Cæstus, thy soft bosom arm ;
 Above it let the decent tucker rise,
 To hide the mystic band from mortal eyes !
 When Spleen's dark Powers would teach that breast
 to swell, 400

This guardian Cincture shall those Powers repel :
 As the touch'd talisman, more swift than thought,
 To save her charge, th' Arabian Fairy brought ;
 So shall this Zone, if justly I'm obey'd,
 Bring my soft spirit to thy certain aid. 405

In Love's great name observe this high behest !

Revere my power—Be gentle, and be blest !”

Here the kind Sprite her friendly counsel clos'd,
And lightly vanish'd—Still SERENA doz'd ;
Still in sweet trance she fondly seem'd to hear 410
The soft persuasion vibrate in her ear.

But waking now far different notes she found ;

Less pleasing echoes in her chamber found :

For now the heralds of the London day

Sing their loud mattins in th' uncrowded way ; 415

Th' impatient Milkmaid now, with early din,

Screams to the rattle of her pail of tin ;

With Sweep's faint cry, and, latest of the crew,

The deep-ton'd music of the murmuring Jew.

END OF THE FIRST CANTO.

CANTO

C A N T O II.

YE radiant Nymphs ! whose opening eyes convey
 Warmth to the world, and lustre to the day !
 Think what o'ershadowing clouds may cross your
 brain,
 Before those lovely lids shall close again !
 What funds of Patience twelve long hours may ask,
 When cold Discretion claims her daily task ! 6
 Ah think betimes ! and, while your morning care
 Sheds foreign odors o'er your fragrant hair,
 Tinge your soft spirit with that mental sweet,
 Which may not be exhal'd by Passion's heat ; 10
 But charm the sense, with undecaying power,
 Thro' every chance of each diurnal hour !
 O ! might you all perceive your toilets crown'd
 With such cosmetics as SERENA found !
 For, to the warning Vision fondly true, 15
 Now the quick Fair-one to the toilet flew :

With

30 THE TRIUMPHS OF TEMPER.

With keen delight her ravish'd eye survey'd
 The mystic ribband on her mirror laid :
 Bright shone the azure, as Aurora's car,
 And every spangle seem'd a living star. 20

With sportive grace the smiling damsel prest
 The guardian Cincture to her snowy breast,
 More lovely far than Juno, when she strove
 To look most lovely in the eyes of Jove ;
 And willing Venus lent her every power, 25
 That sheds enchantment o'er the amorous hour :
 For spells more potent on this band were thrown,
 Than Venus boasted in her beauteous zone.

Her dazzling Cæstus could alone inspire
 The sudden impulse of short-liv'd desire : 30
 These finer threads with lasting charms are fraught,
 Here lies the tender, but unchanging thought,
 Silence, that wins, where eloquence is vain,
 And Tones, that harmonize the mad'ning brain,
 Soft Sighs, that Anger cannot hear, and live, 35
 And Smiles, that tell, how truly they forgive ;
 And lively Grace, whose gay diffusive light
 Puts the black phantoms of the brain to flight,

Whose

THE TRIUMPHS OF TEMPER. 31

Whose cheering powers thro' every period last,
And make the present happy as the past. 40

Such secret charms this richer Zone posselt,
Whose flowers, now sparkling on SERENA's breast,
Give, tho' unseen those swelling orbs they bind,
Smiles to her face, and beauty to her mind :

For now, observant of the Sprite's behest, 45

The Nymph conceals them by her upper vest :

Safe lies the spell, no mortal may descry,

Not keen PENELOPE's all-piercing eye ;

Who constant, as the steps of morn advance,

Surveys the household with a searching glance, 50

And entering now, with all her usual care,

Reviews the chamber of the youthful Fair.

Beneath the pillow, not compleatly hid,

The Novel lay—She saw—she seiz'd—she chid :

With rage and glee her glaring eye-balls flash, 55

Ah wicked age ! she cries, ah filthy trash !

From the first page my just abhorrence springs ;

For modern anecdotes are monstrous things :

Yet will I see what dangerous poisons lurk,

To taint thy youth, in this licentious work. 60

She

32 THE TRIUMPHS OF TEMPER.

She said : and rudely from the chamber rush'd,
Her pallid cheek with expectation flush'd,
With ardent hope her eager spirit shook,
Vain hope ! to banquet on a luscious book.

So if a Priest, of the Arabian sect, 65

In Turkish hands forbidden wine detect,
The sacred Mussulman, with pious din,
Arraigns the culprit, and proclaims the sin,
Curfes with holy zeal th' inflaming juice,
But curling takes it for his secret use. 70

The gay SERENA, with unruffled mind,
The pleasing Novel, thus unread, resign'd.

The Vision on her soul such virtue left,

She only smil'd at the provoking theft ;

The teasing incident she deem'd a jest, 75

Nor felt the Zone grow tighter on her breast.

Now in full charms descends the finish'd Fair,
For now the morning banquet claims her care ;

Already at the board, with viands pil'd,

Her Sire impatient sits, and chides his tardy child.

On his imperial lips rude Hunger reigns, 81

And keener Politics usurp his brains :

But

But when her love-inspiring voice he hears,
 When the soft magic of her smile appears,
 In that glad moment he at once forgets 85
 His empty stomach, and the nation's debts :
 He bends to Nature's more divine controul,
 And only feels the Father in his soul.
 Quick to his hand behold her now present
 The Indian liquor of celestial scent ! 90
 Not with more grace the nectar'd cup is given
 By rose-lip'd Hebe to the Lord of Heaven.
 While her fair hands a fresh libation pour,
 Fashion's loud thunder wakes the sounding door.
 The light SERENA to the window springs, 95
 On Curiosity's amusive wings :
 Her quick eyes sparkle with surprise, to see
 The glories of a golden vis-à-vis :
 Its glittering tablet gleam'd with mimic pearl,
 And the rich coronet announc'd an Earl. 100
 The good old Knight grew somewhat proud to hear
 Of this new visit from the early Peer :
 SERENA recollects the Vision's truth,
 And fluttering, hopes it is the promis'd Youth :

34 THE TRIUMPHS OF TEMPER.

PENELOPE from her high chamber peeps ; 105
 There her unfinish'd charms she coyly keeps ;
 With sage reserve her modesty abhorr'd
 To shew her morning face before a Lord.

The Peer alights : the well-rang'd vassals bawl
 His sounding title thro' the spacious hall, 110
 Till in the deep saloon's extremest bound
 Th' ear-tickling words, "LORD FILLIGREE," re-
 found !

As when great Hector, setting war apart,
 Advanc'd to parley, with his spear athwart,
 The Greeks beheld him with a still delight ; 115
 And silent reverence stopt the rising fight ;
 With such respect, but unchastis'd by fear,
 Sir GILBERT and the Nymph first meet the Peer ;
 And, while his morning compliments commence,
 The flighted breakfast stands in cold suspense. 120
 But far unlike to Hector's ruder grace
 His modern stature, and his modish face !
 Nor less he differs from those Barons old,
 Whose arms are blazon'd on his car of gold ;
 Whose prostrate castle guarded once the lands, 125
 Where, spruce in motley pride, his villa stands,

By

By Taste erected, in her trimmest mode,
Her mushroom structure, and her quaint abode.

As the neat Daisy to the Sun's broad flower,
As the French Boudoir to the Gothic Tower, 130
Such is the Peer, whom Fashion much admires,
Compar'd in person to his ancient fires :

For their broad shoulder, and their brawny calf,
Their coarse, loud language, and their coarser laugh,
His finer form, more elegantly slim, 135
Displays the fashionable length of limb :

With foreign shrugs his country he regards,
And her lean tongue with foreign words he lards ;
While Gallic Graces, who correct his style,
Forbid his mirth to pass beyond a smile. 140

As the nice workman in the wooden trade,
Hides his coarse ground, with finest woods o'erlaid,
Thus our young Lord, with Fashion's phrase refin'd,
Fineer'd the mean interior of his mind :

And hence, in Courtesy's soft lustre seen, 145
His spirit shone, as graceful as his mien.

The artless Fair, on Fashion's kind report,
Thought him the mirror of a matchless Court :

36 THE TRIUMPHS OF TEMPER.

Much she his dress, his language much observes,
Whose finer accents prove his feeling nerves. 150

Her fancy now the destin'd Lover spies,
But her free heart abjures the quick surmise;

Yet as he spoke, at every flattering word
The Vision's promise to her thought recurr'd.

Far more parental pride contrives to blind 155

The good Sir GILBERT's more-experienc'd mind,
Who fondly saw, and at the prospect smil'd,

A future Countess in his favourite child.

But what new flutterings shook SERENA's breast,

What hopes and fears the modest Nymph oppress'd, 160

When with a simpering smile, and soft regard,

The Peer display'd a mirth-expressive card,

Where the gay Graces, in a sportive band,

Shew the sweet art of Cipriani's hand;

Where, in their train, his airy Cupids throng, 165

And laughing drag a comic mask along!

"We," cries my Lord, with self-sufficient joy,

Twirling, with lordly airs, the graceful toy,

"We,

“ We, who possess true science, we, who give
 The world a lesson in the art to live, 170
 We for the the Fair a splendid Fête design,
 And pay our homage thus at Beauty’s shrine.”
 He spoke ; and speaking, to the blushing Maid,
 With modish ease, th’ inviting card convey’d,
 Where Mirth announc’d her masque-devoted hour
 In characters intwin’d with many a flower : 176
 The blushing Maid, with eyes of quick desire,
 View’d it, and felt her little soul on fire ;
 For of all scenes she had not yet survey’d,
 Her heart most panted for a Masquerade : 180
 But her gay hopes increasing terrors drown,
 And dread forebodings of her Father’s frown.
 In mute suspense to read his thought she tries,
 And strongly pleads with her prevailing eyes,
 Her eyes, for doubt enchain’d her modest tongue,
 While on his sovereign word her pleasure hung. 186
 With such a tender, and persuasive air
 Of soft endearment, and of anxious care,
 Thetis attended from th’ almighty Sire
 His fateful answer to her fond desire : 190

38 THE TRIUMPHS OF TEMPER.

The good old Knight, like the Olympian God,
 Blest the fair Suppliant with his gracious nod ;
 Her lively spirit the kind signal took,
 And her glad heart, in every fibre, shook.

The party settled, it imports not how, 195
 The Peer politely made his parting bow :
 The Nymph, with eyes that sparkled joyous fire,
 Kiss'd the round cheek of her complying Sire,
 Then swiftly flew, and summon'd to her aid
 Th' important counsel of her favourite maid, 200
 To vent her joy, and, as the moments press,
 To fix that first of points, a Fancy-dress.

Quick as the Poet's eyes o'er Nature fly,
 Piercing the deep, or traversing the sky,
 With such light speed her fond ideas glance 205
 O'er play and poem, story and romance,
 While all the Characters, she e'er has read,
 Flash on her brain, and fill her busy head.

Now in Diana's form she hopes to meet
 A fond Endymion fighting at her feet ; 210
 Now her proud thought terrestrial pomp assumes,
 And Dian's crescent yields to Indian plumes ;

Now,

Now, in the habit of the Grecian Isles,
 She hears some Osman suing for her smiles,
 And sees his soul that blaze of dress outshine, 215
 Whose wealth impoverish'd a diamond-mine ;
 Now simpler charms her quick attention draw,
 The rose-crown'd bonnet, and the hat of straw,
 A Village-maid she seems, in neat attire,
 A faithful Shepherd now her sole desire. 220
 Thus, as new figures in her fancy throng,
 " She's every thing by starts, and nothing long ;"
 But, in the space of one revolving hour,
 Flies thro' all states of Poverty and Power,
 All forms, on whom her veering mind can pitch,
 Sultana, Gipsy, Goddess, Nymph, and Witch. 226
 At length, her soul with Shakespeare's magic fraught,
 The wand of Ariel fixt her roving thought ;
 Ariel's light graces all her heart possess,
 And Jenny's order'd to prepare the dress. 230
 It seems already bought, with fond applause ;
 An azure tiffue, and a silver gauze ;
 Too soon, alas ! that garb of heavenly hue
 The ready Mercer flashes to her view.

40 THE TRIUMPHS OF TEMPER.

* Ah blind to Fate ! how oft the youthful belle
 Feels her gay heart at sight of tiffue swell ! 236
 And thinks the fashionable filk must prove
 Her robe of triumph, and a spell to Love !
 To thee, sweet Maid, whose pleasure-darting eyes
 Joy in this favourite vest, an hour shall rise, 240
 When thou shalt hate the filk so fondly sought,
 And wish thy silver-spotted gauze unbought :
 For busy Spleen thy trial now prepares ;
 Darkly she forms her unsuspected snares,
 And, keen to raise her pleasure-killing storm, 245
 Assumes PENELOPE'S congenial form.
 In that prim shape, which all the Graces shun,
 See the four Fiend to good Sir GILBERT run !
 Where, deeply pondering the Public Debt,
 Silent he muses o'er a new Gazette ! 250

- * *Nescia mens hominum fati sortisque futuræ,
 Et servare modum, rebus sublata secundis.
 Turno tempus erit, magno cum optaverit emptum
 Intactum Pallanta, et cum spolia ista diemque
 Oderit.* ÆNEID, x. v. 501. & seq.

Ent'ring,

Ent'ring, she view'd, with eyes of envious spite,
 The card, that spoke the masque-devoted night :
 Eager she darted on the graceful toy,
 And, fiercely pointing to each naked boy,
 " Canst thou," she cried, in a discordant scream,
 That rous'd the Politician from his dream, 256
 While with her voice the echoing chamber rings,
 " * Say ! canst thou suffer these flagitious things ?
 " Are these devices to thy daughter brought,
 " That wake such gross impurity of thought ? 260
 " In vain are all the prudent words I preach,
 " The modest maxims that I strive to teach,
 " By foolish fondness of your sense beguil'd,
 " You still indulge, and spoil the flippant child :
 " For me, whate'er I say is deem'd absurd ; 265
 " She scorns my sage advice :—but mark my word,
 " If to this ball you let the Hoyden run,
 " Your power is ended, and the Girl undone."

The patriot Knight, by interruption vex'd,
 In his political pursuits perplex'd, 270

* Ζευ πάτερ, ὦ νημεσίζη, οὐκ ἔστι ταῦτα καρτερὰ ἔργα, &c.

While

While he with wrath th' intruding Mischief eyed,
Stern to the false PENELOPE replied :

“ Go ! teasing Prude, cease in my ears to vent
“ Thy envious pride, and peevish discontent !
“ To me of prudence canst thou vainly boast ? 275
“ Of all my household, thou hast plagu'd me most :
“ The joys thou blamest are thy dear delight,
“ By day the Visit, and the Ball by night :
“ And, tho' too old a Lover to trepan,
“ Thy midnight dream, thy morning thought, is
Man. 280

“ Wert thou less closely to my blood allied,
“ Thou should'st, to cure thee of thy canting pride,
“ Be sent to sigh alone o'er purling brooks,
“ Scold village maids, and croak to croaking rooks.”

He spoke indignant : the fly Fiend withdrew,
Nor inly griev'd ; for well her force she knew. 286
As Indian females, in a jealous hour,
Of secret poison try the subtlest power,
Which sure, tho' slow, corrodes th' unconscious
prey,

And ends its triumph on a distant day : 290

Thus

Thus the departing Fury left behind
 Her venom, latent in Sir GILBERT's mind,
 The hidden mischief tho' no eye observes,
 He feels it fretting on his alter'd nerves ;
 But the kind habit of his healthy soul 295
 Still struggled hard against its base controul.
 Now Spleen's dark vapours, in his bosom hid,
 Prompt him the promis'd pleasure to forbid ;
 Now Love's soft pleadings that dire thought destroy,
 And save the blossom of his daughter's joy ; 300
 Her envious Aunt now serves him for a jest,
 And gay good-humour reassumes his breast.

While Spleen's dark power now sinks and now
 revives,

At length the day, th' important day, arrives,
 Which in his breast must end the close debate, 305
 And fix the colour of SERENA's fate.

Now comes the hour, when the convivial Knight
 Waits to begin the dinner's chearful rite :
 His fond heart ever, with a Father's pride,
 Joys to behold his darling at his side ; 310
 But most the absence of her smile he feels
 In the gay season of his social meals :

Hence,

Hence, while for her the rich repast attends,
 His hasty summons to the Nymph he sends :
 The happy Nymph superior cares induce 315
 To risk his anger by a rash excuse :
 She craves his pardon ; but, for time distressed,
 She still is busy on her magic vest ;
 To range her diamonds in a sparkling zone,
 She begs to snatch her scanty meal alone. 320

The Knight in fullen state begins to dine :
 Spleen, like a Harpy, flutters o'er his wine :
 Invisible she poisons every dish,
 Tinging with gall his mutton, fowl, and fish.
 The more he eats, the more perverse he grows ; 325
 For as his hunger sunk, his choler rose.
 The cloth remov'd, he cries, with vapours sick,
 The Pears are mellow, and the Port is thick ;
 Tho' nicer fruit Pomona never knew,
 And his rich wine surpass'd the ruby's hue ! 330

A thousand times his dizzy brain revolves
 A stern command : now doubts, and now resolves
 To bid the Nymph descend, and, disarray'd,
 Quit her dear project of the Masquerade :

As oft kind Nature to his heart recurr'd, 335
And Love parental stopt the cruel word.

Mean time, unconscious of the brooding storm,
The Nymph exults in her improving form :
Gay is her smile, as those the Queen of Love
Darts on the Graces in her court above, 340
While they contrive, with love-inspiring cares,
New modes of beauty for the robe she wears.
At length, each duty of the toilet past,
The glance of triumph on the mirror cast,
Now the light wand our finish'd Ariel arms ; 345
Glad Jenny glories in her Lady's charms ;
And gives full utterance, as she smooths her vest,
To the sweet bodings of SERENA's breast.

O ! lovely bias of the Female soul !
Which trembling points to Pleasure's distant pole ;
Which with fond trust on flattering Hope relies, }
O'erleaps each peril, that in prospect lies, }
And springing to the goal, anticipates the prize ! }
Such was SERENA's fear-discarding state ;
Her eye beheld not the dark frowns of Fate : 355
She only saw, the combat all forgot,
The triumph promis'd as her glorious lot.

Now,

Now, eager to display her light attire,
 The sprightly Damsel seeks her sullen Sire;
 His gloomy brow with sportive air she kist: 360
 Ah! how could Spleen that magic lip resist?
 That voice, whose melting music might assuage
 The scorpion Anger's self-tormenting rage?
 For ne'er did Nature to a Sire's embrace
 Present a filial form of softer grace; 365
 Or Fancy view a shape of lovelier kind
 In the bright mirror of her Shakespeare's mind.

The sulky Fiend, in spite of all her art,
 Had now been banish'd from the Father's heart,
 But that, resolv'd her utmost force to try, 370
 She summon'd to her aid her old ally,
 The fiery Demon, temper-troubling Gout,
 Who sinks the lively, and appalls the stout;
 Who now, assisting Spleen's malignant aim,
 Shoots in quick throbbings through Sir GILBERT'S
 frame. 375

Thus sorely pester'd by a double foe,
 Gallling his giddy brain, and burning toe,
 The testy Knight, with stern and sullen air,
 Denounc'd his humour to the shudd'ring Fair:

“ Go change your dress ! give up this vain delight !

“ I will not hear of Masquerades to-night : 381

“ Your Chaperone’s inform’d, she need not wait,

“ So change your dress ! and sit with me sedate.”

As the proud dame, whose avaricious glee
Built golden castles in the rich South Sea, 385

Gaz’d on her Broker, when he told her first
Her wealth was vanish’d, and the bubble burst :

So gaz’d the Nymph, hearing her Sire destroy
Her airy palace of ideal joy.

First her fond thoughts to flattering doubt incline,
And deem the harsh command no fix’d design, 391

But the quick fall of a peevish word,

That Love revokes, the moment it is heard :

Or haply mirth, in mimic wrath express,

A feign’d forbiddance utter’d but in jest : 395

To this short hope her sinking spirit clung,

To see his softening eyes refute his tongue.

Ah fruitless hope ! for there she cannot find

The well-known signals of the friendly mind.

Stern Contradiction, with the frown of Fate, 400

On his dark visage reign’d in sullen state ;

Felt

48 THE TRIUMPHS OF TEMPER.

Felt in each feature, in each accent shewn,
 Lower'd in his look, and thunder'd in his tone.
 Hence the warm bosom of the lively Fair
 Now shivers with the chill of blank despair : 405
 Now Disappointment's thick'ning shadows roll
 A cloud of horror o'er the darken'd soul ;
 And Fancy, in a sick delirium tost,
 Gives double value to each pleasure lost.
 The blasted joys, she labours to forget, 410
 Rush on her mind, and waken keen regret :
 Her cheek turns pale—the tear prepares to start,
 And palpitation heaves her swelling heart.
 But here, SOPHROSYNÉ ! thy guardian aid
 Saves from her potent foe the sinking Maid. 415
 Her bosom, into strong emotions thrown,
 Now feels the pressure of thy friendly Zone.
 Swift thy kind cautions to her soul recur,
 More quick to cancel faults, than prone to err.
 As the rough swell of the insurgent tides 420
 By the mild impulse of the Moon subsides :
 So, by her mystic Monitor repress,
 The flood of passion leaves her lighten'd breast,

From

From her clear brain each cloudy vapour flies,
 And Joy's bright ray rekindles in her eyes. 425
 Reviving Gaiety full lustre spread
 O'er all her features, and with smiles she said :
 " Let others drive to Pleasure's distant dome!
 " Be mine the dearer joy to please at home !"
 Scarce had she spoke, when she with sportive ease
 Prest her Piano-forte's fav'rite keys, 431
 O'er softest notes her rapid fingers ran,
 Sweet prelude to the Air she thus began !

SOPHROSYNE ! thou Guard unseen !
 Whose delicate controul 435
 Can turn the discord of Chagrin
 To Harmony of Soul !
 Above the lyre, the lute above,
 Be mine thy melting tone,
 Which makes the peace of all we love 440
 The basis of our own !

So sung the Nymph, not uninspir'd : the Sprite
 Invok'd so fondly in the mystic rite,

50 THE TRIUMPHS OF TEMPER.

With richest music swell'd her warbling throat,
 And gave new sweetness to her sweetest note. 445
 As when the seraph Uriel first begun
 His carol to the new-created Sun,
 The sacred echo shook the vast profound,
 And Chaos perish'd at the potent sound :
 So, at the magic of SERENA's strain, 450
 Spleen vanish'd from her Sire's chaotic brain ;
 Whose fibres, lighten'd of that load, rejoice
 In the dear accents of her dulcet voice.
 Much he inclines his mandate to recall,
 And send the Fair-one to the promis'd Ball ; 455
 But stubborn Pride forbids him to revoke
 The solemn sentence, which Ill-humour spoke.
 Still, conscious of her power, the Nymph prolongs
 The soft enchantment of her soothing songs ;
 Which his fond mind in firm attention keep, 460
 To his fixt hour of supper and of sleep :
 This now arriv'd, the Knight retiring, shed
 A double blessing on his Darling's head ;
 And with unusual exultation prest
 His lovely Child to his parental breast. 465

Thus

Thus while to rest the happy Sire withdrew,
 The Nymph, more happy, to her chamber flew ;
 And, Jenny now dismiss'd, the grateful Fair
 Breathes to her guardian Sprite this tender prayer :
 " Thou kind Preserver ! whose attentive zeal 470
 " Gives me in this contented hour to feel
 " That dearest pleasure of a soul refin'd,
 " The triumph of the self-corrected mind ;
 " If happy in the strength thy smiles impart,
 " I own thy favour in no thankless heart, 475
 " Still let me view thy form, so justly dear !
 " Still in kind Visions to these eyes appear !
 " Thy friendly dictates teach me to fulfil !
 " And let thy aid avert each future ill !"

While fond Devotion taught her thus to speak,
 The soft Down sinks beneath her lovely cheek, 481
 And settling on her lips, that sweetly close,
 Silence, enamour'd, lulls her to repose.

END OF THE SECOND CANTO.

C A N T O III.

YE kind Transporters of the excursive soul !
 Ye Visions! that, when Night enwraps the
 Pole,

The lively wanderer to new worlds convey,
 Escaping from her heavy house of clay,
 How could the gentle spirit, foe to strife, 5
 Bear without you this coil of waking life ?
 Its grief-embitter'd cares, its joyless mirth,
 And all the flat realities of earth ?
 'Tis you, sweet Phantoms, who new powers inspire,
 Who give to Beauty charms, to Fancy fire, 10
 When, soaring like the eagle's kindred frame,
 The Poet dreams of everlasting Fame ;
 Or, tickled by the feather of the dove,
 The softer Virgin dreams of endless Love.
 There was a time, when Fortune's bright decrees
 Were seen to realize such dreams as these : 16
 Now dangerous visions the fond mind decoy
 Vainly to hope for unexisting joy,

While

While Belles and Bards with mournful sighs exclaim,
Mortality has seiz'd both Love and Fame. 20

Ah fair SERENA, might the boast be ours
To clear from such a charge these heavenly Powers !
Blest ! might thy Bard deserve in Fame to see
A guard as faithful, as Love proves to thee !
Blest ! if that airy Being gild his life, 25

Who sav'd thee trembling on the brink of strife,
And now, kind prompter of thy nightly dream,
Fill'd thy rapt spirit with her sacred beam !

For soon as Slumber set thy soul at large,
Thy Guardian Power revisited her charge ; 30

And, lightly hovering o'er th' illumin'd bed,
Thus with fond smiles of approbation said :

“ Well hast thou past, sweet Maid, one trying scene,

“ One fiery ordeal of the tyrant Spleen :

“ Thus, my SERENA, may thy force sustain 35

“ Each harder trial, that may yet remain !

“ Against the Fiend to fortify thy soul,

“ By useful knowledge of her dark controul,

“ I come to shew thee, what no mortal eye,

“ Save thine, was e'er permitted to descry ; 40

54 THE TRIUMPHS OF TEMPER.

“ The realms, where Spleen’s infernal agents goad
 “ The ghostly tenants of her drear abode.
 “ Now summon all thy strength ! throw fear aside,
 “ And firmly trust in thy ætherial Guide !”

She spoke: and thro’ the Night’s furrounding
 shade 45

The obedient Nymph, not unappall’d, convey’d ;
 Thro’ long, long tracts of darkness, on they past
 With speed, that struck the trembling Maid aghast,
 Till now, recovering by degrees, she found
 Her soft foot press upon the solid ground. 50

Encourag’d by her Guide, at length she tries
 To search the gloomy scene, with anxious eyes.

* “ Thro’ me ye pass to Spleen’s terrific dome,
 Thro’ me, to Discontent’s eternal home :
 Thro’ me, to those, who sadden’d human life, 55
 By sullen humour, or vexatious strife ;

* Per me si va nella citta dolente,
 Per me si va nell’ eterno dolore,
 Per me si va tra la perduta gente,
 * * * * *

Lasciate ogni speranza, voi ch’ intrate.
 Queste parole di colore oscuro
 Vid’ io scritte al sommo d’una porta.

DANTE, Inferno. 3.

And

And here, thro' scenes of endless vapours hurl'd,
 Are punish'd in the forms they plagued the world ;
 Justly they feel no joy, who none bestow,
 All ye who enter, every hope' forego !" 60

O'er an arch'd cavern, rough with horrid stone,
 On which a feeble light, by flashes, shone,
 These characters, that chill'd her soul with dread,
 SERENA, fixt in silent wonder, read.

As she began to speak, her voice was drown'd 65
 By the shrill echo of far other sound :

Forth from the portal lamentable cries
 Of wailing Infants, without number, rise.
 Compassion to this poor and piteous flock
 Led the soft Maid still nearer to the rock. 70

The pining band within she now espied,
 And, touch'd with tender indignation, cried,
 " How could these little forms, of life so brief,
 " Deserve this dire abode of lasting grief ?"
 " — Well may thy gentle heart be sore concern'd
 " At sight so moving," the mild Sprite return'd : 76
 " Thou seest in those, whose wailings wound thy ears,
 " The puny progeny of modern Peers :

“ Their Sires, by Avarice or Ambition led,
 “ Aliens to Love, approach’d the nuptial bed ; 80
 “ With proud indifference, and with cold distaste,
 “ Their homely brides reluctantly embrac’d,
 “ And by such union gave disastrous birth
 “ To these poor pale incumbrances of earth,
 “ Who, bred in Vanity, with Pride their dower, 85
 “ Were Spleen’s sure victims from their natal hour,
 “ And in their splendid cradles pul’d and pin’d,
 “ Till Fate their ill-spun thread of life untwin’d,
 “ And to this vestibule convey’d their ghosts,
 “ To form the van-guard of th’ infernal hosts. 90
 “ But let not Pity’s ineffectual charm
 “ Impede thy progress, or thy strength disarm !
 “ Follow and fear not ! guarded by my care,
 “ From all the phantoms, that around thee glare.”

She spoke ; and enter’d, ere the Nymph replied,
 A pass, that open’d in the cavern’s side, 96
 Low, dark, and rocky—with her body bent,
 SERENA follow’d down the dire descent.
 A sudden light soon struck her dazzled view ;
 But ’twas a light of such infernal hue, 100

As

As double horror to the darkneſs gave,
 With dread reflection from a duſky wave.
 Round a black water tatter'd ſpectres ſtand,
 With each a tiny taper in its hand ;
 Fierce Mendicants ! who ſtrive ſome alms to win
 From the fair Wanderer, with inceſſant din. 106
 The Guardian Spirit ſaw SERENA grieve,
 To hear of wants ſhe knew not to relieve ;
 And to the generous Nymph in pity cries :
 “ The gulph of Indolence before us lies, 110
 “ O'er whoſe dull flood, to which no bank is ſeen,
 “ A boat muſt waſt thee to the dome of Spleen.
 “ Theſe pallid figures, that around thee preſs,
 “ And haunt thee with importunate diſtreſs,
 “ On earth were Beggars of each different claſs,
 “ Tho' blended here in one promiſcuous maſs. 116
 “ The Poor, who ſpurn'd kind Induſtry's controul,
 “ The Rich, who begg'd from penury of ſoul :
 “ Both, by their abject pride alike debas'd,
 “ Blaſphem'd that nature, which they both diſgrac'd,
 “ And, hither by the ſullen Fiend convey'd, 121
 “ Here ſtill they ply their ineffectual trade ;
 “ In

“ In chafe of each new passenger they run,
 “ Condemn’d to beg from all, to gain by none.
 “ But from these wretches turn thy fruitless care !
 “ Behold the gulph before thee, and beware ! 126
 “ Nor touch the stream, which mortal sense o’er-
 comes,

“ And by its baleful charm the soul benumbs !”
 —“ Can mortal pass !” the shudd’ring Nymph re-
 plied,

“ This sullen, slow, unnavigable tide, 130
 “ In whose black current this enormous mound
 “ Of shapeless stone appears, this horrid bound,
 “ That seems an everlasting guard to keep
 “ O’er the dull waters, that beneath it creep ?”

While yet she spoke, with a resounding shock,
 Forth from the arch of the impending rock, 136
 Which o’er the murmuring eddy hung so low,
 The lazy river scarce had room to flow,
 Of rude construction, and in roughest plight,
 A boat now issued to SERENA’S sight ; 140
 An empty boat, that slowly to the shore
 Advanc’d, without the aid of sail or oar ;

Self-mov'd it seem'd, but soon the Nymph beheld
A grisly figure, who the stern impell'd.

Wading behind, the horrid Form appear'd ; 145
Above the water his strong arm he rear'd,
And cross the creeping flood the crazy vessel
steer'd. }

The heavenly Sprite observ'd her trembling Ward,
Whose growing fears the hideous pass abhorr'd,
And cheering thus she spake : " This Spectre boasts
" The chief dominion of these dreary coasts : 151
" To him, thy Pilot, without dread consign,
" And place thy body in his bark supine !
" So thro' this arching rock thou'lt pass alone,
" Safe from the perils of th' incumbent stone : 155
" Embark undaunted !—on the farther side
" Thou'lt surely find me thy unfailing Guide.
" Nor let this Pilot raise thy groundless dread,
" This sullen Charon of the froward dead,
" A Phantom, never blest with human life, 160
" Tho' oft on earth his noxious power is rise ;
" And in that region, ne'er from error free,
" The words he dictates are assign'd to me.

" Observe

" Observe this Fiend, that Nature scorn'd to frame,
 " Offspring of Pride, and Apathy his name ! 165
 " Passions he ne'er can feel, and ne'er impart,
 " A miscreated Imp, without a heart ;
 " In place of which, his subtle parent pinn'd
 " A bladder, fill'd with circulating wind,
 " Which seems with mimic life the mass to warm,
 " And gives false vigour to his bloated form. 171
 " But place thee in the boat, his arms direct,
 " My love shall watch thee, and my power protect."

So spake the friendly Sprite ; th' obedient Maid
 Her form along the narrow vessel laid : 175

But oh ! what terrors shake her tender soul,
 As from the shore the bark begins to roll ;
 And, sever'd from her Friend, her eyes discern
 The steering Spectre wading at the stern !
 Far stronger fears her resolution melt, 180
 Than those, which erst the Bard of Florence felt,
 When, by the honour'd shade of Virgil led
 Thro' all the dreary circles of the dead,
 Hell's fiercest Demons threaten'd to divide
 The living Poet from his shadowy Guide ; 185

And

And bade him, friendless, and alone, return
 Thro' the dire horrors of the dark sojourn.
 Not long the lovely Fair-one's terrors last ;
 For safely thro' th' impending rock she past :
 And slow advancing to the gloomy strand, 190
 The fullen Pilot brings her safe to land.

There fondly hovering on her guardian plumes,
 The heavenly Monitor her charge resumes ;
 And smiling, leads along the rocky road,
 Whose windings open into Spleen's abode. 195

Thou Queen of Shades ! whose spirit-damping
 spell

Too oft is seen the Poet's pride to quell,
 When the sharp workings of unrelish'd wit
 Plunge thy pale victim in a bilious fit ;
 May I, unpunish'd by thy subtle power, 200
 Dare to display thy subterranean bower,
 And to this wond'ring upper world explain
 The shadowy horrors of thy secret reign ?

Entering beneath a wide fantastic arch,
 Round the drear circuit of the dome they march ;
 Which a pale flash from many a fiery Sprite 206
 Frequent illumines with intermitting light ;

Such,

Such, as on earth, to Superstition's eye,
 Denounces ruin from the northern sky,
 While she discerns, amid the nightly glare, 210
 Armies embattled in the blazing air.

Around the Nymph unnumber'd phantoms glide ;
 Here swell the bloated race of bulky Pride :
 In close and horrid union, there appear
 The wilder progeny of frantic Fear ; 215
 Mis-shapen monsters ! whose stupendous frame
 Abhorrent Nature has refus'd to name.
 Here, in Cameleon colours, lightly flit
 The motley offspring of disorder'd Wit.
 All things prodigious the wide cave contain'd, 220
 And forms, beyond what Fable ever feign'd :
 But, as the worm, that on the dewy green
 Springs half to view, and half remains unseen,
 Perceiving near its cell a human tread,
 Slinks back to earth, and hides its timid head : 225
 So, where the heavenly Spirit deign'd to lead,
 The startled spectres from her step recede ;
 And, as abash'd they from her eye retire,
 Sink into mist, or melt in fluid fire.

High on an ebon throne, superbly wrought 230
 With each fierce figure of fantastic thought,
 In a deep cove, where no bright beam intrudes,
 O'er her black schemes the sullen Empress broods.
 The Shriek-Owl's mingled with the Raven's plume
 Shed o'er her furrow'd brows an awful gloom ;
 A garb, that glares with stripes of lurid flame, 236
 Wraps in terrific pomp her haggard frame ;
 Round her a Serpent, as her zone, is roll'd,
 Which writhing, stings itself in every fold.

Near her pavilion, in barbaric state, 240
 Four Mutes the mandates of their Queen await.
 From sickly Fancy bred, by sullen Sloth,
 Both parents' curse, yet pamper'd still by both,
 First stands Disease ; an hag of magic power,
 Varying her frightful visage every hour, 245
 Her horrors heightening, as those changes last,
 And each new form more hideous than the past.
 Detraction next, a shapeless Fiend, appears,
 Whose shrivell'd hand a misty mirror rears ;
 Fram'd by malignant Art, th' infernal toy 250
 Inverts the lovely mien of smiling Joy,

Robs roseate Beauty of attractive Grace,
 And gives a stepdame's frown to Nature's face.
 The third in place, but with a fiercer air,
 See the true Gorgon Disappointment glare ! 255
 By whose petrific power Delight's o'erthrown ;
 And Hope's warm heart becomes an icy stone.
 Last, in a gorgeous robe, that, ill bestow'd,
 Bows her mean body by its cumbrous load,
 Stands fretful Discontent, of Fiends the worst, 260
 By dignity debas'd, by blessings curst,
 Who poisons Pleasure with the fourest leaven,
 And makes a Hell of Love's extatic Heaven.

The Guide celestial, near this ghastly group,
 Perceiv'd her tender Charge with terror droop: 265
 " Fear not, sweet Maid, " she cries, " my steps
 pursue !

" Nor gaze too long on this infernal crew !
 " Turn from Detraction's fascinating glass !
 " In silence cross the throne ! observe, and pass !
 " Beyond this dome, the palace of the Queen, 270
 " Her empire winds thro' many a dreary scene,
 " Where she torments, as their deserts require,
 " Her various victims, that on earth expire ;

" Each

- " Each class apart : for in a different cell 274
 " The Fierce, the Fretful, and the Sullen dwell :
 " These shalt thou slightly view, in vapours hurl'd,
 " And swiftly then regain thy native world.
 " But first remark, within that ample nich,
 " With every quaint device of splendor rich,
 " Yon Phantom, who, from vulgar eyes withdrawn,
 " Appears to stretch in one eternal yawn : 281
 " Of empire here he holds the tottering helm,
 " Prime Minister in Spleen's discordant realm,
 " The pillar of her spreading state, and more,
 " Her darling offspring, whom on earth she bore ;
 " For, as on earth his wayward mother stray'd, 286
 " Grandeur, with eyes of fire, her form survey'd,
 " And with strong passion starting from his throne,
 " Unloos'd the sullen Queen's reluctant zone.
 " From his embrace, conceiv'd in moody joy, 290
 " Rose the round image of a bloated boy :
 " His nurse was Indolence ; his tutor Pomp,
 " Who kept the child from every childish romp ;
 " They rear'd their nursling to the bulk you see,
 " And his proud parents call'd their imp ENNUI.

- " This realm he rules, and in superb attire 296
 " Visits each earthly palace of his Sire :
 " A thousand shapes he wears, now pert, now prim,
 " Pursues each grave conceit, or idle whim ;
 " In arms, in arts, in government engages, 300
 " With Monarchs, Poets, Politicians, Sages ;
 " But drops each work, the moment it's begun,
 " And, trying all things, can accomplish none :
 " Yet o'er each rank, and age, and sex, his sway
 " Spreads undiscern'd, and makes the world his prey.
 " The light Coquet, amid flirtation, sighs, 306
 " To find him lurk in Pleasure's vain disguise ;
 " And the grave Nun discovers, in her cell,
 " That holy water but augments his spell.
 " As the strange monster of the serpent breed, 310
 " That haunts, as travellers tell, the marshy mead,
 " Devours each nobler beast, tho' firmly grown
 " To size and strength superior to his own ;—
 " For on the grazing Horse, or larger Bull,
 " Subtly he springs, of dark saliva full, 315
 " With swiftly-darting tongue his prey anoints
 " With venom, potent to dissolve its joints,
 " And,

“ And, while its bulk in liquid poison swims,
 “ Swallows its melting bone, and fluid limbs:—
 “ So this Ennui, this wonder-working Elf, 320
 “ Can vanquish powers far mightier than himself:
 “ Nor Wit nor Science soar his reach above,
 “ And oft he seizes on successful Love.
 “ Of all the radiant host who lend their aid
 “ To light mankind thro’ life’s bewildering shade,
 “ Bright Charity alone, with cloudless ray, 326
 “ May boast exemption from his baleful sway:
 “ Haste then, sweet Nymph, nor let us longer roam
 “ Round the drear circle of this dangerous dome!
 “ Left e’en thy Guide, entangled in his spell, 330
 “ Should fail to guard thee from a Fiend so fell!”

So speaking, the kind Spirit’s anxious care
 Led from the palace the attentive Fair,
 And, winding through a passage dark and rude,
 Thus the mild Monitor her speech renew’d: 335
 “ ’Gainst Fear and Pity now thy bosom steel,
 “ For sights more horrible I now reveal!
 “ Spleen’s tortur’d victims view with dauntless eyes;
 “ For lo! her penal realms before thee rise!”

The Nymph advancing saw, with mute amaze,
A dismal, deep, enormous dungeon blaze. 341

Stones of red fire the hideous wall compos'd ;
And massive gates the horrid confine clos'd.

Th' infernal Portress of this doleful dome,
With fiery lips, that swell'd with poisonous foam, 345

Pale Discord, rag'd ; with whose tormenting tongue,
Thro' all its caves th' extensive region rung :

A living Vulture was the Fury's crest ;
And in her hand a Rattlesnake she prest,
Whose angry joints incessantly were heard 350

To found defiance to the screaming Bird.

“ The boundless depth of this dire prison holds

“ The untam'd spirits of imperious Scolds :

“ Nor think that Females only fill the cave !

“ Male Termagants have liv'd, and here they rave.

“ All of each sex are pent within this pale, 356

“ Who knew no use of language, but to rail.”

Thus to her Charge exclaim'd the heavenly Guide,
And, as she spoke, the portals open'd wide,

And to th' observance of the shuddering Maid, 360

Th' immeasurable den was all display'd.

But

But oh ! what various noises from within
 Fill the vext air with one stupendous din !
 Mourning's deep groan, and Anger's furious call,
 Terror's loud cry, and Affectation's squall, 365
 The sob of Passion, the Hysteric scream,
 And shrieks of Frenzy, in its fierce extreme !
 In this wild uproar every sound's combin'd,
 That stuns the senses, and distracts the mind.
 " Mark," (to the Nymph SOPHROSYNE began)
 " The fierce Xantippe flaming in the van, 371
 " The vase, she emptied on the Sage's head,
 " Hangs o'er her own, a different shower to shed ;
 " For, drop by drop, distilling liquid fire,
 " It fills the Vixen with new tropes of ire. 375
 " Beyond the Grecian dame extend your view,
 " And mark the spectre of a modern Shrew !
 " She, who whene'er she din'd, with furious look,
 " Spurn'd her nice food, and bellow'd at her cook,
 " Here justly feels a culinary rack, 380
 " Bound like Ixion, to a whirling jack.
 " But lo the Tityus of this realm ! whose hulk
 " Is stretch'd supine, and whose enormous bulk

- " To such extent in this wide scene is spread,
 " Nine acres seem too narrow for his bed ! 385
 " This form was once (but many years are past,
 " Since in his Civic furs he breath'd his last)
 " Lord Mayor of London ; his whole life one treat,
 " And all his business but to rail and eat.
 " The circling group of Fish, and Fowl, and
 Beasts, 390
 " Once crown'd his table, and compos'd his feasts ;
 " For all the creatures (mark this strange event !)
 " Which he devour'd with growling discontent,
 " O'er him their reunited limbs display,
 " The grumbling Glutton's flesh they rend }
 away, 395 }
 " And find his swelling form a never-failing prey.
 " See ! where nine Bucks have gor'd his mon-
 strous haunch,
 " See ! fifty Turkeys gobble on his paunch !
 " O'er his broad side twelve creeping Turtles spread,
 " And Fowls unnumber'd flutter round his head."
 SERENA gaz'd, but soon she turn'd away, 401
 Sick with disgust, and shuddering with dismay.
 " To

“ To scenes less hideous let us now repair ! ”

(Said the kind Guard of the dejected Fair)

And, cheering her faint Charge, her step she led 405
To the near dwelling of the fretful dead.

Of dusky adamant the dungeon rose ;
A dingy mirror its dark sides compose,
Reflecting, with a thousand quaint grimaces,
The pale inhabitants’ distorted faces. 410

“ Here, like a Dame of Quality array’d,

“ Sits Peevishness, presiding o’er the shade,

“ And frowning at her own uncomely mien,

“ Whose coarse reflection on the wall is seen.

“ A snarling Lap-dog her right-hand restrains, 415

“ Her lap an infant Porcupine contains,

“ Which, while her fondness tries its wrath to still,

“ Wounds her each moment with a pointed quill.

“ The froward Spirits here in durance fret,

“ Whose testy life was one continued pet ; 420

“ Here they in trifles that vexation find,

“ Which teaz’d on earth their irritated mind.

“ Observe the Phantom, who with eyes askance

“ Still to the mirror turns her eager glance !

“ See ! to her cheek, incessant as she turns, 425

“ Her vex’d blood rushes, and her visage burns.

“ Beauty for lasting bliss had form’d the Maid ;

“ Love to her charms his faithful homage paid ;

“ But, all this swelling tide of joy to check,

“ A fatal Freckle rises on her neck : 430

“ Her soft cosmetics the griev’d Nymph applies,

“ Success attends her, and the Freckle dies :

“ But ah ! this victory avails her not ;

“ She finds an Hydra in the teasing spot :

“ Fast as one flies, another still succeeds, 435

“ And with eternal food her fretful humour feeds.

“ Near to the Nymph, in a more moody fit,

“ See the pale Phantom of a peevish Wit !

“ Mark with what frowns his eager eyes peruse,

“ Wet from the press, three Critical Reviews !

“ With wounded Vanity’s distracting rage 441

“ How rapidly he runs thro’ every page !

“ He finds some honours lavish’d on his Verse,

“ And Joy’s faint gleams his gloomy spirit pierce.

“ But oh ! too soon these feeble sparks decay ; 445

“ And keen Vexation resumes her prey.

“ Hating

" Hating reproof, in every fibre sore,
 " One censur'd particle torments him more,
 " More than a hundred happier lines delight,
 " Which liberal favour condescends to cite. 450

" But time will fail us, if we pause to view
 " The various torments of the testy crew ;
 " These wretched chymists, whose o'erheated brain
 " Extracts from nothing a substantial pain.
 " Yet, ere to different districts we advance, 455
 " Take of one fretful tribe a transient glance !
 " Their unsuspected punishments supply
 " A lesson, useful to the Female eye.

" Spleen's liveliest agent here beguiles the gay,
 " Fair to attract, and flattering to betray." 460

As thus the kind ætherial Guardian spoke,
 Within a rock, whence plaintive murmurs broke,
 She touch'd a secret spring, whose power was such
 Two jarring doors unfolded at the touch,
 And, with the charms of regal splendor bright, 465
 A chearful banquet sparkles to the sight.

Viands so light, so elegantly grac'd,
 Might tempt e'en Temperance herself to taste ;

For

74 THE TRIUMPHS OF TEMPER.

For Fruits alone compos'd th' inticing treat,
 Fair to the eye, and to the palate sweet. 470
 In such bright juice the Peach and Cherry swim,
 As make the Topaz and the Ruby dim.
 Here crown'd with every flower, and gaily drest
 In all the glitter of a Gallic vest,
 Whose ample folds her loathsome body screen'd,
 A child of Luxury reigns, a subtle Fiend ! 476
 Who, with a grace that every heart allures,
 Smiles on the lustre of her rich *liqueurs*.
 Her fatal smiles their utmost power exert
 To poison Beauty at her dire dessert ; 480
 To blast the rose that Health's bright cheek adorns,
 And fill each festive heart with latent thorns :
 For the sly Fiend, of every art possesst,
 Steals on th' affection of her Female guest ;
 And, by her soft address seducing each, 485
 Eager she plies them with a Brandy Peach :
 They with keen lip the luscious fruit devour ;
 But swiftly feel its peace-destroying power.
 Quick thro' each vein new tides of frenzy roll :
 All evil passions kindle in the soul, 490

Drive

Drive from each feature every chearful grace,
 And glare ferocious in the fallow face ;
 The wounded nerves in furious conflict tear,
 Then sink, in blank dejection and despair.
 Effects more dire, thus tempting to deceive, 495
 The Apple wrought not in the soul of Eve ;
 Howe'er disguis'd, in Jelly or in Jam,
 Spleen has no poison surer than a Dram.

“ But haste we now,” (the heavenly Leader cries)
 “ To where this penal world's last wonder lies !”
 She spoke ; and led the Nymph thro' deeper dells, 501
 Low-murmuring vaults, and horror-breathing cells.
 And now they pass a perforated cage,
 Where rancorous Spectres without number rage.
 “ Avert thine eye !” (the heavenly Spirit said) 505
 “ Nor view these abject tribes of envious dead !
 “ Who pin'd to hear the voice of Truth proclaim
 “ A Sister's beauty, or a Brother's fame !
 “ Tho' crown'd with all Prosperity imparts,
 “ High in their various ranks, and several arts ; 510
 “ Yet, meanly sunk by Envy's base controul,
 “ They died in that consumption of the soul ;

76 THE TRIUMPHS OF TEMPER.

“ And here, thro’ bars that twisted Adders make,
 “ And the long volumes of th’ envenom’d Snake,
 “ O’er this dark road they dart an anxious eye, 515
 “ Still envying every Fiend, that flutters by.
 “ Pass! and regard them not!”—Th’ attentive

Maid

In silent tremor the behest obey’d.

This dungeon crost, her weary feet she drags
 Thro’ winding caverns, and o’er icy crags: 520
 Soul-chilling damps in the dark passage reign,
 Which issues on a vast and dreary plain,
 Fann’d by no breezes, with no verdure crown’d;
 The black horizon is its only bound.

And now advancing, in a drizzly mist, 525
 Thro’ fullen Phantoms, hating to exist,
 SERENA spies, high o’er his subjects plac’d,
 The ghastly Tyrant of the gloomy waste.
 Murmuring he sits upon a rocking stone,
 Th’ unstable base of his ill-founded throne: 530

Hideous his face, and horrible his frame,
 Misanthropy the grisly Monster’s name!
 Him to fierce Pride, with raging passion sore,
 The frowning Gorgon, Disappointment, bore;

On

On earth detested, and by heaven abhorr'd, 535

Of this drear wild he reigns the moody lord.

Few are the subjects of his waste domain,

And scarce a Female in his frightful train,

Except one changing corps of ancient Prudes :

Reluctant here the prying band intrudes. 540

Each, who on earth, behind her artful fan,

Feign'd coarse aversion to the creature Man,

Is doom'd, in this dark region, to abide

Some transient pains for hypocritic pride.

Here ever-during chains those Scoffers bind, 545

Whose writings deaden and debase the mind ;

Who mock Creation with injurious scorn,

And feel a fancied void in Plenty's horn.

In his right-hand, an emblem of his cares,

A branch of Aconite the Monarch bears ; 550

And those four Phantoms, who this region haunt,

He feeds with berries from this deadly plant ;

For, strange to tell ! tho' sever'd from its root,

The bough still blackens with successive fruit.

The tribes, who taste it, burst into a fit 555

Of raving mockery and rancorous wit ;

And,

And, pleas'd their Tyrant's ghastly smile to court,
By vile distortions make him various sport.

The frantic rabble, who his sway confess,
Before his throne an hideous Puppet dress ; 560
When in unseemly rags they have array'd

The image, from their own dark semblance made,
In horrid gambols round their work they throng,
With antic dance and rude discordant song ;
Satire's rank offals on the block they fling, 565
And call it Nature, to delight their King :

While in their features he exults to see
The frowns of Torture, mixt with grins of Glee.
For, as these abject toils engage the crew,
Their own grim idol darkens to their view ; 570

Wide and more wide its horrid stature spreads,
And o'er the tribe new consternation sheds :
For each forgets, in his bewilder'd gaze,
'Tis but a Monster, which he help'd to raise.
As o'er its form their dizzy glances roll, 575

It strikes a cheerless damp thro' all the soul.
Vainly to shun the baleful sight they try,
It draws for ever the reluctant eye :

At each review with deeper dread they start ;
 A colder chaos numbs each freezing heart. 580
 No mutual confidence, no friendly care,
 Relieves the panic they are doom'd to bear ;
 For as they shrink absorb'd in wild affright,
 When each to each inclines his wounded fight,
 They feel, for social comfort, four disgust, 585
 And all the fullen anguish of distrust.

“ Now mark, SERENA ! (the mild Guide began)
 “ The proudest Phantom of the gloomy clan,
 “ Appointed, by this surly Monarch's grace,
 “ High-priest of all his Misanthropic race ! 590
 “ See o'er the crowd a throne of vapours lift
 “ That strange and motley form, the shade of
 SWIFT !

“ Now shalt thou view” (the guardian Sprite pur-
 fues)
 “ His horrid pennance, that each day renews :
 “ Perchance its terrors may o'erwhelm thy sense,
 “ But trust my care to bear thee safely hence !” 596
 As thus she spoke, above the gazing throng,
 High in a sailing cloud the Spectre swept along.

Vain of his power, of elocution proud,
 In mystic language he harangu'd the crowd ; 600
 The bounds he mark'd, with measure so precise,
 Of Equine virtue, and of Human vice,
 That, cursing Nature's gifts, without remorse,
 Each sullen hearer wish'd himself a Horse.
 Pleas'd with the pure effect his sermon wrought,
 Th' ambitious Priest a rich Tiara caught, 606
 Which, hovering o'er his high-aspiring head,
 Sarcastic Humour dangled by a thread.
 The rich Tiara, for his temples fit,
 Blaz'd with each polish'd gem of brilliant wit ; 610
 And sharp-fac'd Irony, his darling Sprite,
 Who rais'd her patron to this giddy height,
 Fast on his brow the dangerous honour bound,
 But, in the moment that her Priest was crown'd,
 His airy throne dissolv'd, and thunder rent the
 ground. 615 }
 Forth from the yawning earth, with lightning's speed,
 Sprung the fierce phantom of a fiery Steed,
 Spurring his sides, whence bloody poison flow'd,
 The ghastly-grinning Fiend, Derision, rode.

In her right-hand a horrid whip she shakes, 620
 Whose founding lash was form'd of knotted snakes :
 An uncouth bugle her left-hand display'd,
 From a grey monkey's skull by Malice made ;
 As her distorted lips this whistle blew,
 Forth rush'd the Spectre of a wild Yahoo. 625
 See the poor Wit in hasty terror spring,
 And fly for succour to his grisly King !
 In vain his piercing cries that succour court :
 'The grisly King enjoys the cruel sport.
 Behold the fierce Yahoo, her victim caught, 630
 Drive her sharp talons thro' the seat of thought !
 'That copious fountain, which too well supplied
 Perverted Ridicule's malignant tide.
 Quick from her steed the grinning Fiend descends,
 From the pierc'd skull the spleenful brain she rends,
 To black Misanthropy, her ghastly King, 636
 See the keen Hag this horrid present bring !
 Her daily gift ! for, as each day arrives,
 Her destin'd victim for new death revives.
 The Huntress now, this direst pageant past, 640
 On her wild bugle blew so dread a blast,

The sharp sound pierc'd thro' all the depths of Hell; }
 The Fiends all answer'd in one hideous yell, }
 And in a fearful trance the soft SERENA fell. }
 Hence from the lovely Nymph her senses fled, 645
 Till, thro' the parted curtains of her bed,
 The amorous Sun, who now began to rise,
 Kist, with a sportive beam, her opening eyes *.

END OF THE THIRD CANTO.

* The opinion of some respectable Critics had almost led me to change the close of this Canto, as containing too severe a censure on one of the great writers, who have done most honour to our language. And, indeed, when I reflect on the inimitable talents, the public spirit, and the charitable institutions of Swift, I am almost ready to address his Spirit with this humiliating apostrophe:

“ I confess that I have done thee wrong.”—

But a superior attention to the interest of society inclines me to persevere in a very different sentiment, and still to think, that no talents, no virtues in a writer, can properly exempt even the most brilliant work from severe reprehension, when, instead of improving, it has

an

an evident tendency to debase and vilify human nature—a tendency, that I consider as most evident in the composition to which I have alluded :—if I am wrong in this idea, I may yet shelter myself under the authority of two most honourable names—a moral Poet of a generous and exalted spirit, and a learned Critic of infinite candour and discernment.—In Young's Essay on Original Composition, and in the posthumous work just bequeathed to the public by the lamented Mr. Harris, the misanthropy of Swift is most warmly censured. The words of the latter are so striking and apposite, that I cannot wish for a stronger justification. “ Misanthropy is so dangerous a thing, and goes so far in sapping the very foundations of Morality and Religion, that I esteem the last part of Swift's Gulliver (that I mean relative to his Houyhnhnms and Yahoos) to be a worse book to peruse, than those which we forbid, as the most flagitious and obscene. One absurdity in this Author (a wretched Philosopher though a great Wit) is well worth remarking—in order to render the nature of Man odious, and the nature of Beasts amiable, he is compelled to give human characters to his Beasts, and beastly characters to his Men ; so that we are to admire the Beasts, not for being Beasts, but amiable Men ; and to detest the Men, not for being Men, but detestable Beasts.”

HARRIS's Philological Enquiries,
vol. ii. page 538.

C A N T O IV.

HA IL, thou enlighten'd Globe of human joy !
 Where social cares the soften'd heart employ :
 What cheering rays of vital comfort roll
 In thy bright regions o'er the rescued soul,
 Which, 'scaping from the dark domain of Spleen, 5
 Springs with new warmth to thy attractive scene !
 Once more I bless thy pleasure-breathing gale,
 And gaze enchanted on thy flowery vale,
 Where smiling Innocence, and ardent Youth,
 Sport hand in hand with Beauty and with Truth.
 Sport on, sweet revellers ! in rosy bowers, 11
 Safe from th' intrusion of all evil Powers !
 Ah fruitless wish of the benignant Muse,
 Which to this chequer'd world the Fates refuse !
 For round its precincts many an ugly Sprite 15
 Speeds undiscern'd to poison pure delight :
 Amidst the foremost of this haggard band,
 Unwearied poster of the sea and land,

Wrapt

Wrapt in dark mists, malignant Scandal flies,
 While Envy's poison'd breath the buoyant gale
 supplies. 20

Tho' SHERIDAN, with shafts of comic wit,
 Pierc'd, and expos'd her to the laughing Pit,
 Th' immortal Hag still wears her paper crown,
 The dreaded Empress of the idle Town :
 O'erleaping her prerogative of old, 25
 To sink the noble, to defame the bold ;—
 In chace of Worth to slip the dogs of Strife,
 Thro' all the ample range of public life ;—
 The Tyrant now, that sanctuary burst
 Where Happiness by Privacy is nurs'd, 30
 Her fury rising as her powers encrease,
 O'erturns the altars of domestic Peace.

Pleas'd in her dark and gall-distilling cloud
 The sportive form of Innocence to shroud,
 Beauty's young train her baleful eyes survey, 35
 To mark the fairest, as her favourite prey.
 Hence, sweet SERENA, while thy spirit stray'd
 Round the deep realms of subterranean shade,
 This keenest agent of th' infernal Powers
 On earth was busied, in those tranquil hours, 40

86 THE TRIUMPHS OF TEMPER.

To blast thy peace, and poison'd darts to aim
 Against the honour of thy spotless name :
 For Scandal, restless Fiend, who never knows
 The balmy blessing of an hour's repose,
 Worn, yet unfated with her daily toil, 45
 In her base work consumes the midnight oil.
 O'er fiercer Fiends when heavy slumbers creep,
 When wearied Avarice and Ambition sleep,
 Scandal is vigilant, and keen to spread
 The plagues that spring from her prolific head. 50
 On Truth's fair basis she her falsehood builds,
 With tinsel sentiment its surface gilds ;
 To nightly labour from their dark abodes
 The Demons of the groaning Press she goads,
 And smiles to see their rapid art supply 55
 Ten thousand wings to every infant lye.
 In triumph now behold the Hag applaud
 He keen and fav'rite Imp, ingenious Fraud,
 Her quick Compositor, whose flying hand
 Has clos'd the paragraph she keenly plann'd. 60
 No Nymph she nam'd, yet mark'd her vile intent,
 That Dullness could not miss the name she meant :

In

In Satire's tints the injur'd Fair she drew,
In form an Angel, but in soul a Jew.

It chanc'd her Sire among his friends inroll'd 65
A wealthy Senator, infirm and old ;

Who, dup'd too early by a generous heart,
Rashly assum'd a Misanthropic part :

Tho' peevish fancies would his mind incrust,
Good-nature's image lurk'd beneath their rust ; 70

And gay SERENA, with that sportive wit

Which heals the folly that it deigns to hit,

Would oft the sickness of his soul beguile,

And teach the fullen humorist to smile ;

Pleas'd by her virtuous frolics to assuage 75

The mental anguish of distemper'd age.

This ancient friend, in a sarcastic sketch,

Was mark'd by Scandal as a monied wretch,

For whom the young, yet mercenary Fair

Had subtly spread a matrimonial snare. 80

With such base matter, more diffusely wrought,

The spirit-piercing paragraph was fraught,

O'er which with glee the eye of Scandal glar'd,

Which for the opening Press herself prepar'd ;

She on the types her inky wad let fall, 85
 And smear'd each letter with her bitterest gall ;
 The Press, whose ready gripe the charge receives,
 Stamps it successive on ten thousand leaves,
 Which pil'd in heaps impatient seem to lie,
 They only wait the dawn of day to fly. 90

Now, as the trembling child, which long has laid
 Mute in the dark, and of itself afraid,
 When, haply conscious of the pain it feels,
 The watchful mother to its pillow steals,
 Springs to her breast, and shakes off all alarms, 95
 Feeling its safety in her fostering arms :
 With such quick joy, in innocence as young,
 The soft SERENA from her pillow sprung,
 Pleas'd to awake from her terrific dream,
 And feel the chearful Sun's returning beam. 100
 Eager she rose, in busy thought, nor staid
 The wonted summons of her punctual Maid,
 And as her own fair hands adjust her vest,
 The guardian Cincture flutters on her breast ;
 For fondly, when she wak'd, or when she slept, 105
 Still round her heart th' important Zone she kept.

Thou

Thou happy Girdle ! to thy charge be just !
 Firm be thy threads, and faithful to their trust ;
 For hours approach, when all the stores they hide
 Of magic virtue, must be strongly tried !— 110
 Now, while her kind domestic heart intends
 To please her early Sire, the Nymph descends ;
 But Sleep, who left the Fair with sudden flight,
 With late wings hover'd o'er the good old Knight ;
 And the chill circle of the lone saloon 115
 Informs the shiv'ring Maid she rose too soon.
 'Tis true, attentive John's unfailing care
 Began the rites of breakfast to prepare ;
 But yet no fires on the cold altar burn,
 No smoke arises from the silver urn, 120
 And the blank tea-board, where no viands lay,
 Only supplied the Paper of the day.

Tho' mild SERENA's peace-devoted mind
 The keen debate of politics declin'd,
 And heard with cold contempt, or generous hate,
 The frauds of Party and the lies of State ; 126
 Nor car'd much more for Fashion's loose intrigues,
 Than factious bickerings, or foreign leagues ;
 Yet,

Yet, while she saunters idle and alone,
Her careless eyes are on the Paper thrown. 130

As some gay Youth, whom sportive friends engage
To view the furious Ourang in his cage,
If while amus'd he sees the monster grin,
And trusts too careless to the bolts within,
If the fly Beast, as near the grate he draws, 135

Tear him unguarded with projected paws,
Starts at the wound, and feels his bosom thrill
With pain and wonder at the sudden ill :
So did SERENA start, so wildly gaze,
In such mixt pangs of anguish and amaze, 140
Feeling the wound which Scandal had design'd
To lacerate her mild and modest mind.

Startled, as one who from electric wire
Unheeding catches unsuspected fire,
She reads, then almost doubts that she has read, 145
And thinks some vision hovers round her head.
Now, her fixt eye some striking words confine,
And now she darts it thrice thro' every line ;
Nor could Amazement more her senses shake,
Had every letter been a Gorgon's snake. 150

Now

Now rising Indignation takes its turn,
 And her flush'd cheeks with tingling blushes burn,
 With restless motion and with many a frown,
 Thro' the wide room she paces up and down :
 Now, musing, makes a momentary stand, 155
 The fatal Paper fluttering in her hand.
 So the shy Bird, by cruel sportsmen sprung,
 And by their random fire severely stung,
 Scar'd, not disabled, by the distant wound,
 Now trembling flies, now skims along the ground,
 Now vainly tries, in some sequester'd spot, 161
 From her gor'd breast to shake the galling shot.

Ye tender Nymphs ! whose kindling souls would
 flame,

Touch'd, like SERENA's, by injurious blame,
 O let your quick and kindred spirits form 165
 A vivid picture of the mental storm
 In which she labour'd, and whose force to paint
 The Muse's strongest tints appear too faint ;
 In sympathetic thought her suffering see !
 But O, for ever from such wrongs be free ! 170

Her faithful Girdle try'd its power to save,
 And oft a monitory impulse gave ;

Still unregarded, still unfelt; it prest
 With uselefs energy her heaving breast;
 Her mind, forgetful of the magic Zone, 175
 Full of the burning shaft by Scandal thrown,
 With blended notes of sorrow and disdain,
 Thus in disorder'd language vents its pain :—
 “ Had Malice dar'd my honour to defame,
 “ The self-refuted lie had lost its aim : 180
 “ But here the world, deceiv'd by stand'rous art,
 “ Must think SERENA has a venal heart.”
 A venal heart ! at that detested sound,
 In swelling anguish her sunk voice was drown'd.
 Now was a fearful crisis of her fate : 185
 Distended now by Passion's growing weight,
 And for its Mistress fill'd with conscious dread,
 The magic Girdle crack'd thro' every thread,
 And snapp'd perchance by Scandal's force accurst,
 From her full heart the guardian Zone had burst,
 And, spite of all the virtues of the Fair, 191
 The spell of Happiness had sunk in air,
 But that SOPHROSYLE, whose friendly fear
 Timely foresaw this trial too severe,

An early succour gain'd from secret Love, 195
 From the fell Kite to snatch the falling Dove.

As Nature studies, in her wide domain,
 To blend some antidote with every bane ;
 Thus her kind aid the friendly Power contriv'd,
 That, from the quarter whence the wound arriv'd,
 There flow'd, the anguish of that wound to calm, 201
 A soothing, soft, and medicinal balm.

As in her agitated hand the Fair
 Wav'd the loose Paper with disorder'd air,
 In capitals she saw SERENA flame : 205
 She blush'd, she shudder'd, as she view'd the name ;
 Her ready fears subside in new surprize,
 And eager thus she reads with lighten'd eyes :

“ Go, faithful Sonnet, to SERENA say

“ What charms peculiar in her features reign : 210

“ A stranger, whom her glance may ne'er survey,

“ Pays her this tribute in no flattering strain.

“ Tell her, the Bard, in Beauty's ample reign,

“ Has seen a virgin cheek as richly glow,

“ A bosom,

- " A bosom, where the blue meandering vein 215
 " Sheds as soft lustre thro' the lucid snow,
 " Eyes, that as brightly flash with joy and youth,
 " And locks, that like her own luxuriant flow :
 " Then say, for then she cannot doubt thy truth,
 " That the wide earth no Female form can shew
 " Where Nature's legend so distinctly tells, 221
 " In this fair shrine a fairer spirit dwells."

With curious wonder the reviving Maid
 View'd this fond homage to her beauty paid ;
 A second glance o'er every line she cast, 225
 And half pronounc'd and half suppress'd the last,
 While modest Pleasure, and ingenuous Pride,
 Her burning cheek with deeper crimson dy'd.

O Praise ! thy language was by Heaven design'd
 As manna to the faint bewilder'd mind : 230
 Beauty and Diffidence, whose hearts rejoice
 In the kind comfort of thy cheering voice,
 In this wild wood of life, wert thou not nigh,
 Must, like the wandering Babes, lie down and die :
 But

But thy sweet accents wake new vital powers, 235
 And make this thorny path a path of flowers :
 As oil on Ocean's troubled waters spread,
 Smooths the rough billow to a level bed,
 The soothing Rhyme thus soften'd into rest
 The painful tumult of SERENA's breast. 240

Now, to herself restor'd, the conscious Maid
 The lurking Fiend's insidious snare survey'd ;
 Her nerves, with grateful trepidation, own
 A lighter pressure from the faithful Zone ;
 And in fond thought she breathes a thankful prayer
 For her ætherial Guardian's constant care ; 246
 Yet with a keen desire her bosom glow'd,
 To hear from whom the gentle Sonnet flow'd ;
 But kind SOPHROSYNE, who watch'd unseen,
 To shield her votary from the wiles of Spleen, 250
 As friendly Love had fixt a future time,
 When to reveal the secret of the Rhyme,
 Strove till that hour her fancy to restrain,
 Nor let her anxious wishes rise to pain.

As Gaiety's fresh tide began to roll, 255
 Fast in the swelling channel of her soul,

The good old Knight descends, tho' eager, slow,
The Gout still tingling in his tender toe ;

And now, paternal salutations past,

His eyes he keenly on the Paper cast, 260

While his sweet Daughter, with attentive grace,

Before him flies his ready cup to place ;

For Tea and Politics alternate share,

In friendly rivalry, his morning care.

Tho' smooth as oil the Knight's good-humour
flows, 265

When the mild breeze of pleasant fortune blows,

Yet, quick to catch the casual sparks of ire,

Like oil it kindles into mounting fire ;

And fiercely now his flaming spirit blaz'd,

While on those galling words he wildly gaz'd, 270

Whose force had almost work'd into a storm

The gentler elements in Beauty's form.

As the sarcastic sentence caught his view,

Back from the board his elbow-chair he drew,

And, by sharp stings of sudden fury prick'd, 275

Far from his foot his gouty stool he kick'd.

Fierce as Achilles, by Atrides stung,

He pour'd the stream of vengeance from his tongue.

But

But ah, those angry threats he deign'd to speak,
 Had sounds, alas ! far differing from the Greek.
 Rage from his lips in legal language broke ; 281
 Of Juries and of Damages he spoke,
 And on the Printer's law-devoted head,
 He threaten'd deep revenge in terms most dread ;
 Terms, that with pain the ear of Beauty pierce,
 And oaths too rough to harmonize in verse. 286

While thus the good old Knight, with passion hot,
 His Toast neglected, and his Tea forgot,
 The discord of the drama to increase,
 Now prim PENELOPE assails her Niece ; 290
 For, as Sir GILBERT now, with choler dumb,
 Points her the period with his angry thumb,
 " Ah ! Brother," cries the stiff, malignant crone,
 (Her sharp eye swiftly thro' the sentence thrown)
 " Scandal could never rise to heights like this, 295
 " But from the manners of each modern Miss ;
 " Had but my Niece, less giddy and more grave,
 " Observ'd the prudent hints I often gave——"

The honest Knight her vile conclusion saw,
 And quick curtail'd it with a testy " Pshaw !" 300

Mean while the gentle Maid, who heard the taunt,
Survey'd without a frown her prudish Aunt :

Far other thoughts employ'd her softer mind,
To one sweet purpose all her soul inclin'd ;

How she might close th' unpleasant scene, how best

Restore good-humour to her Father's breast. 306

Her airy Guardian with delight survey'd

These tender wishes in the lovely Maid,

And, to accomplish what her heart desir'd,

Trains of new thought above her age inspir'd. 310

As Venus on her son's enlighten'd face

Shed richer charms, and more attractive grace,

When, issuing forth from the dissolving cloud,

His bright form burst on the admiring croud :

So kind SOPHROSYNE, unseen, supplies 315

A livelier radiance to SERENA's eyes ;

And, ere she speaks, to captivate her Sire,

Touches her lips with patriotic fire.

It chanc'd, that, toss'd upon a vacant chair,

A volume of that Wit lay near the Fair, 320

Whose value, try'd by Fashion's varying touch,

Once rose too high, and now is sunk too much ;

The

The book, which Fortune plac'd within her reach,
Contain'd, O CHESTERFIELD, the liberal speech
In which thy spirit, like an Attic Sage, 325
Strove to defend the violated Stage
From fetters basely forg'd by Ministerial rage. }

From this the Nymph her useful lesson took,
And thus began, reclining on the Book :—

“ If on this noble Lord we may rely, 330

“ Scandal is but a speck on Freedom's eye ;

“ And Public Spirit, then, will rather bear

“ The casual pain it gives by growing there,

“ Than, by a rash attempt to move it thence,

“ Hazard the safety of a precious Sense, 335

“ And, by the efforts of a vain desire,

“ Rob this life-darting eye of all its fire.

“ Tho' the soft breast of Innocence may smart,

“ By cruel Calumny's corroding dart,

“ Yet would she rather ache in every nerve, 340

“ And bear those pangs she knows not to deserve,

“ Much rather than be made a senseless tool,

“ To aid the frenzy of tyrannic rule,

“ Or forge one dangerous bolt for Power to aim

“ At sacred Liberty's superior frame.”— 345

As ancient Chiefs were wont of old to gaze,
 With eyes of tender awe and fond amaze
 On the fair Priestess of the Delphic fane,
 When first she utter'd her prophetic strain,
 Entranc'd in wonder, thus Sir GILBERT view'd
 His child, yet more inspir'd, who thus pursu'd : 351
 " For me, I own, these lines, with gall replete,
 " Shot thro' my simple heart a sudden heat ;
 " But happier thoughts my rising rage repress,
 " And turn'd the pointless insult to a jest : 355
 " And O ! should Slander still new wrath awake,
 " Still may my Father, for his Daughter's sake,
 " Disdain the vengeance of litigious strife,
 " And let SERENA's answer be—her life !"

She ended with a smile, whose magic flame 360
 Shot youthful vigour thro' her Father's frame :
 His Age, his Anger, and his Gout, are fled ;
 " Enchanting Girl !" with tears of joy, he said,
 " Enchanting Girl !" twice echoed from his tongue,
 As, speaking, from his elbow-chair he sprung, 365
 " Come to thy Father's arms !—By Heaven, thou art
 " His own true offspring, and a Whig in heart."

He spoke ; and his fond arms around her curl'd
 With proud grasp, seeming to infold the world.
 Her conscious heart she feels with triumph beat, 370
 And joys to find that triumph is compleat ;
 For stiff PENELOPE, who near them stood,
 “ Albeit unused to the melting mood,”
 Squeez'd from her eye-lid one reluctant tear,
 And soften'd with a smile her brow severe ; 375
 But 'twas a smile of such a gloomy grace,
 As lighten'd once upon Alec'to's face,
 When Orpheus past her, leading back to life,
 From Pluto's regions, his recover'd wife,
 When Love connubial, join'd to Music's spell, 380
 Moist'n'd with tender joy the eyes of Hell.
 Far other smiles, with Pleasure's softest air,
 Gild the gay features of the youthful Fair :
 She looks like sportive Spring, when her young
 charms
 Wind round her hoary Sire's reluctant arms, 385
 And, by a frolic infantine embrace,
 Banish the rugged frown from Winter's face.
 Thro' the long day she felt the glowing tide
 Of exultation thro' her bosom glide ;

And oft she wish'd for slow-approaching Night, 390
 To hold sweet converse with her guardian Sprite,
 At length the hour approach'd her heart desir'd,
 And, in her lonely chamber now retir'd,
 Her tender fancy gave the fondest scope
 To ardent Gratitude and eager Hope. 395

“ Dear airy Being !” (the soft Nymph exclaim'd)
 “ Whose power can break the spell that Spleen has
 fram'd,
 “ Can, by the waving of thy viewless wing,
 “ O'er darkest forms a golden radiance fling,
 “ And make, in minds by sorriest thoughts perplex'd,
 “ This moment's grief the triumph of the next ; 401
 “ I bless thy succour in each trial past ;
 “ Be present still, and save me in the last !”

Thus, with her lovely eyes devoutly fixt,
 Where rays of hope, and fear, and reverence mixt,
 The tender Fair her faithful Guard address'd, 406
 Then with her cheek her downy pillow prest ;
 But long her wakeful lids refuse to close,
 For Curiosity dispels repose.

Her busy mind the mystic veil would pierce, 410
 That hides the Author of the pleasing Verse ;

Her

Her lips involuntary catch the chime,
And half articulate the soothing Rhyme,
Till weary Thought no longer watch can keep,
But sinks reluctant in the folds of Sleep. 415

END OF THE FOURTH CANTO.

C A N T O V.

WHY art thou fled, O blest poetic time,
 When Fancy wrought the miracles of
 Rhyme ;

When, darting from her star-encircled throne,
 Her Poet's eye commanded worlds unknown ;
 When, by her fiat made a mimic God, 5
 He saw Existence waiting on his nod,
 And at his pleasure into being brought
 New shadowy hosts, the vassals of his thought,
 In Joy's gay garb, in Terror's dread array,
 Darker than night, and brighter than the day ; 10
 Who, at his bidding, thro' the wilds of air,
 Rais'd willing mortals far from earthly care,
 And led them wondering thro' his wide domain,
 Beyond the bounds of Nature's narrow reign ;
 While their rapt spirits, in the various flight, 15
 Shook with successive thrills of new delight ?
 Return, sweet season, grac'd with Fiction's flowers,
 Let not cold System cramp thy genial powers !

Shall

Shall mild Morality, in garb uncouth,
 The housewife garb of plain and homely Truth, 20
 Robb'd by stern Method of her rosy crown,
 Chill her faint votaries by a wintry frown ?
 No ; thou sweet friend of Man, as suits thee best,
 Shine forth in Fable's rich-embroider'd vest !
 O make my Verse thy vehicle, thy arms, 25
 To spread o'er social life thy potent charms !
 And thou, SOPHROSYNE, mysterious Sprite !
 If haply I may trace thy steps aright,
 Roving thro' paths untrod by mortal feet,
 To paint for human eyes thy heavenly seat, 30
 Shed on my soul some portion of that power,
 Which sav'd SERENA in the trying hour,
 To bear those trials, which, however hard,
 As Bards all tell us, may befall the Bard ;
 The Fop's pert jest, the Critic's frown severe, 35
 Learning's proud cant, with Envy's artful sneer,
 And, the vext Poet's last and worst disgrace,
 His cold blank Bookseller's rhyme-freezing face.
 Hence ! ye dark omens, that to Spleen belong,
 Ye shall not check the current of my song, 40
 While

While Beauty's lovely race, for whom I sing,
Fire my warm hand to strike the ready string.

As Quiet now her lightest mantle laid
O'er the still senses of the sleeping Maid,
Her nightly Visitant, her faithful Guide, 45
Descends in all her Empyrean pride ;
That Fairy shape no more she deigns to wear,
Whose light foot smooths the furrow plough'd by
care

In mortal faces, while her tiny spear
Gives a kind tingle to the caution'd ear. 50
Now, in her nobler shape, of heavenly size,
She strikes her votary's soul with new surprize.
Jove's favourite daughter, arm'd in all his powers,
Appear'd less brilliant to th' attending Hours,
When, on the golden car of Juno rais'd, 55
In heavenly pomp the Queen of Battles blaz'd :
With all her lustre, but without the dread
Which from her arm the frowning Gorgon shed,
SOPHROSYNE descends, with guardian Love,
To waft her gentle Ward to worlds above. 60
From her fair brow a radiant diadem
Rose in twelve stars, and every separate gem

Shot magic rays, of virtue to controul
 Some passion hostile to the human soul.
 Round her sweet form a robe of æther flow'd, 65
 And in a wondrous car the smiling Spirit rode;
 Firm as pure ivory, it charm'd the sight
 With finer polish and a softer white.
 The hand of Beauty, with an easy swell,
 Scoop'd the free concave like a bending shell; 70
 And on its rich exterior, Art display'd
 The triumphs of the Power the car convey'd.
 Here, in celestial tints, surpassing life,
 Sate lovely Gentleness, disarming Strife;
 There, young Affection, born of tender Thought,
 In rosy chains the fiercer Passions caught; 76
 Ambition, with his sceptre snapt in twain,
 And Avarice, scorning what his chests contain.
 Round the tame Vulture flies the fearless Dove;
 Soft Innocence embraces playful Love; 80
 And laughing Sport, the frolic Child of Air,
 Buries in flowers the sinking form of Care.

These figures, pencil'd with a touch so light,
 That every image seem'd an heavenly Sprite,

Breathe

Breathe on the car ; whose light-enchanted frame
 Four wheels sustain, of pale and purple flame ; 86
 For no fleet animals, to earth unknown,
 Bear thro' ætherial fields this flying throne.

As by the subtle electrician's skill,
 Globes seem to fly, obedient to his will ; 90
 So these four circles of instinctive fire
 Move by the impulse of their Queen's desire,
 Mount or descend by her directing care,
 Or rest, supported by the buoyant air.

Now, springing from her car, that hovering staid
 High in the chamber of the sleeping Maid, 96
 The Goddess, with a voice divinely clear,
 Breath'd these kind accents in her Votary's ear :—

“ Come, my fair Champion, who so well hast fought
 “ The useful battles of contentious Thought ; 100
 “ To aid thy gentle spirit to sustain
 “ The final conflict of thy destin'd pain,
 “ View the rewards that, in my realms of bliss,
 “ Wait the sweet Victor in such war as this !
 “ So haply may thy mind, with strength renew'd,
 “ The dark devices of the Fiend elude ; 106

“ By

“ By one blest effort seal thy triumphs past,
 “ And gain thy promis’d guerdon in the last.”

As thus she spake, her heavenly arms embrac’d,
 And in the car the conscious Maiden plac’d. 110

Quick at her wish the flaming wheels ascend,
 No clouds impede them, wheresoe’er they bend.

As thro’ the empire of the winds they rush’d,
 The winds were all in mute submission hush’d :

And now SERENA, from th’ exalted car, 115

Look’d down, astonish’d, on each sinking star ;

Flying o’er lucid orbs, whose distant light

Yet has not reach’d the scope of human sight ;

And now, not distant from the bounds of Space,

The guardian Sprite suspends their rapid race ; 120

And, while in deep amaze the Nymph admires

The circling meteor’s inoffensive fires,

Pleas’d at her wonder, the mild Power address,

With kind intelligence, her earthly guest : —

“ Of those three Orbs, that in yon chrystal sphere

“ A separate system in themselves appear, 126

“ The last, whose luminous and steady form

“ Shines softly bright, and moderately warm,

“ Contains

" Contains my palace, and the gentle train
 " Whom I have wafted to this pure domain. 130
 " At equal distance my dominions lie
 " From these two larger worlds, more near thine eye :
 " Observe their difference as our wheels advance,
 " And passing, take of each a transient glance."

So speaking, to the grosser globe she sprung, 135
 Her car suspended o'er its surface hung,
 In heavy air ; for round this orb was roll'd
 A circling vapour, dull, and damp, and cold.
 " Here," says SOPHROSYNE, " those Beings dwell,
 " Who wanted soul to act or ill or well ; 140
 " Who faunter'd thoughtless thro' their mortal time,
 " Without a Care, a Virtue, or a Crime :
 " Here still they faunter, in this languid scene ;
 " But pass the dozing crowd, and mark their
 Queen."

And now, slow riding on a Tortoise' back, 145
 Her features lifeless, and each fibre slack,
 Full in their view the Nymph Indifference came ;
 The quick SERENA soon perceiv'd her name ;
 For, as in solemn creeping state she rode,
 In her lax hand she held fair GREVILLE's Ode. 150

Ne'er

Ne'er did the Muse from her sweet treasure cull
Incense so precious for a Power so dull.

Still, as she mov'd along her even way,
The heavy Goddess try'd to read the lay ;
But at each pause her inattentive eye 155

Stray'd from the paper, which she held awry ;

Nor could her lips a single line repeat,

Tho' the soft Verse, most ravishingly sweet,

Thro' Time's dull ear will lasting pleasure spread,

And charm the poppy from Oblivion's head. 160

Thus like a City Mayor, whose heavy barge

Steers its dull progress at the public charge,

This Power, so cumber'd by her empire's weight,

Makes her slow circuit round her sluggish state.

Around her, tribes of rambling Sceptics crawl, 165

Tho' moving, dubious if they move at all.

Before her, languid Pomp, her Marshal, creeps,

Whose hand her banner half unfolded keeps :

Its quaint device her dull dominion spoke—

An Eagle, numb'd by the Torpedo's stroke. 170

“ Enough of scenes so foreign to thy soul,”

SOPHROSYNE exclaim'd ; “ from this dark goal

“ Pass

“ Pass we to regions opposite to this.”

She spoke ; and, darting o’er the wide abyss,
Her car, like lightning in soft flashes hurl’d, 175
Shot to the confines of a clearer world.

Now lovelier views the Virgin’s mind absorb ;
For now they hover’d o’er a lucid orb.

Here the soft air, luxuriously warm,
Imparts new lustre to SERENA’S form : 180

Her eyes with more expressive radiance speak,
And richer roses open on her cheek.

Here, as she gaz’d, she felt in every vein
A blended thrill of pleasure and of pain ;
Yet every object opening to her view, 185
Her quick regard with soft attraction drew.

SOPHROSYNE, who saw the gentle Fair
Lean o’er these confines with peculiar care,
Smil’d at the tender interest she display’d,
And spoke regardful of the pensive Maid : 190

“ Well may’st thou bend o’er this congenial sphere ;

“ For Sensibility is Sovereign here.

“ Thou seest her train of sprightly damsels sport,

“ Where the soft Spirit holds her rural court ;

“ But

“ But fix thine eye attentive to the plain, 195

“ And mark the varying wonders of her reign.”

As thus she spoke, she pois'd her airy seat

High o'er a plain exhaling every sweet ;

For round its precincts all the flowers that bloom

Fill'd the delicious air with rich perfume ; 200

And in the midst a verdant throne appear'd,

In simplest form by graceful Fancy rear'd,

And deck'd with flowers; not such whose flaunting
dyes

Strike with the strongest tint our dazzled eyes ;

But those wild herbs that tenderest fibres bear, 205

And shun th' approaches of a damper air.

Here stood the lovely Ruler of the scene,

And Beauty, more than Pomp, announc'd the Queen.

The bending Snow-drop, and the Briar-rose,

The simple circle of her crown compose ; 210

Roses of every hue her robe adorn,

Except th' insipid Rose without a thorn.

Thro' her thin vest her heighten'd beauties shine ;

For earthly gauze was never half so fine.

Of that enchanting age her figure seems, 215

When smiling Nature with the vital beams

Of vivid Youth, and Pleasure's purple flame,
 Gilds her accomplish'd work, the Female frame,
 With rich luxuriance tender, sweetly wild,
 And just between the Woman and the Child. 220
 Her fair left arm around a vase she flings,
 From which the tender plant Mimosa springs :
 Towards its leaves, o'er which she fondly bends,
 The youthful Fair her vacant hand extends
 With gentle motion, anxious to survey 225
 How far the feeling fibres own her sway :
 The leaves, as conscious of their Queen's command,
 Successive fall at her approaching hand ;
 While her soft breast with pity seems to pant,
 And shrinks at every shrinking of the plant. 230
 Around their Sovereign, on the verdant ground,
 Sweet airy Forms in mystic measures bound.
 The mighty master of the revel, Love,
 In notes more soothing than his mother's Dove,
 Prompts the soft strain that melting virgins sing, 235
 Or sportive trips around the frolic ring,
 Coupling, with radiant wreaths of lambent fire,
 Fair fluttering Hope and rapturous Desire.

Unnumber'd damsels different charms display,
 Pensive with blifs, or in their pleasures gay ; 240
 And the wide prospect yields one touching sight
 Of tender, yet diversified delight.
 But, the bright triumphs of their joy to check,
 In the clear air there hangs a dusky speck ;
 It swells—it spreads—and rapid, as it grows, 245
 O'er the gay scene a chilling shadow throws.
 The soft SERENA, who beheld its flight,
 Suspects no evil from a cloud so light ;
 For harmless round her the thin vapours wreath,
 Not hiding from her view the scene beneath ; 250
 But ah ! too soon, with Pity's tender pain,
 She saw its dire effect o'er all the plain :
 Sudden from thence the sounds of Anguish flow,
 And Joy's sweet carols end in shrieks of woe :
 The wither'd flowers are fall'n, that bloom'd so fair,
 And poison all the pestilential air. 256
 From the rent earth dark Demons force their way,
 And make the sportive revellers their prey.
 Here gloomy Terror, with a shadowy rope,
 Seems, like a Turkish Mute, to strangle Hope ; 260

There jealous Fury drowns in blood the fire
 That sparkled in the eye of young Desire ;
 And lifeless Love lets merciless Despair
 From his crush'd frame his bleeding pinions tear.
 But pangs more cruel, more intensely keen, 265
 Wound and distract their sympathetic Queen :
 With fruitless tears she o'er their misery bends ;
 From her sweet brow the thorny Rose she rends,
 And, bow'd by Grief's insufferable weight,
 Frantic she curses her immortal state : 270
 The soft SERENA, as this curse she hears,
 Feels her bright eye suffus'd with kindred tears ;
 And her kind breast, where quick compassion swell'd,
 Shar'd in each bitter suffering she beheld.

The guardian Power survey'd her lovely grief,
 And spoke in gentle terms of mild relief : 276
 " For this soft tribe thy heaviest fear dismiss,
 " And know their pains are transient as their bliss :
 " Rapture and Agony, in Nature's loom,
 " Have form'd the changing tissue of their doom ;
 " Both interwoven with so nice an art, 281
 " No power can tear the twisted threads apart :

" Yet

“ Yet happier these, to Nature’s heart more dear,
 “ Than the dull offspring in the torpid sphere,
 “ Where her warm wishes, and affections kind, 285
 “ Lose their bright current in the stagnant mind.
 “ Here grief and joy so suddenly unite,
 “ That anguish serves to sublimate delight.”

She spoke ; and, ere SERENA could reply,
 The vapour vanish’d from the lucid sky ; 290
 The Nymphs revive, the shadowy Fiends are fled,
 The new-born flowers a richer fragrance shed ;
 The gentle Ruler of the changeful land,
 Smiling, resum’d her symbol of command ;
 Replac’d the roses of her regal wreath, 295
 Still trembling at the thorns that lurk beneath :
 But, to her wounded subjects quick to pay
 The tender duties of imperial sway,
 Their wants she succour’d, they her wish obey’d,
 And all recover’d, by alternate aid ; 300
 While, on the lovely Queen’s enchanting face,
 Departed Sorrow’s faint and fainter trace,
 Gave to each charm a more attractive grace. }
 Now, laughing Sport, from the enlighten’d plain,
 Clear’d with quick foot the vestiges of Pain ; 305

The gay scene grows more beautifully bright,
 Than when it first allur'd SERENA's sight,
 Still her fond eyes o'er all the prospect range,
 Flashing sweet pleasure at the blissful change :
 Her curious thoughts with fond attachment burn, 310
 Yet more of this engaging land to learn.
 She finds the chief attendants of the Queen,
 Sweet Females, waisted from our human scene ;
 But, as it chanc'd, while all the realm reviv'd,
 A Spirit masculine from earth arriv'd : 315
 Two airy guides conduct the gentle Shade ;
 Genius, in robes of braided flames array'd,
 And a fantastic Nymph, in manners nice,
 Profusely deck'd with many an odd device ;
 Sister of him, whose luminous attire 320
 Flashes with unextinguishable fire ;
 Like him in features, in her look as wild,
 And Singularity by mortals styl'd.
 The eager Queen, and all her smiling Court,
 Surround the welcome Shade in gentle sport ; 325
 For in their new associate all rejoice,
 All pant to hear the accents of his voice,

Tho'

Tho' o'er his frame th' Armenian robe was flung,
 The pleasing stranger spoke the Gallic tongue ;
 But in that language his enchanting art 330

Inspir'd new energy, that seiz'd the heart ;
 In terms so eloquent, so sweetly bold,

A story of disastrous love he told,

Convuls'd with sympathy, the list'ning train,

At every pause, with dear delicious pain, 335

Intreat him to renew the fascinating strain.

And now SERENA, with suspended breath,

Listen'd, and caught the tale of JULIA's death ;

And quick she cries, ere tears had time to flow,

" Blest be this hour ! for now I see ROUSSEAU."

Fondly she gaz'd, till the enchanting sound 340

In such a potent spell her spirit bound,

That, lost in sweet illusion, she forgot

The promis'd scenes of the sublimer spot ;

Till now, her mild Remembrancer, whose care 345

Stray'd not a moment from the mortal Fair,

Rous'd her rapt mind, preparing her to meet

The brighter wonders of her blissful seat ;

While her instinctive car's obedient frame

Now upward rose, like undulating flame. 350

As when some victor on the watery world,
 Bright honour gilding all his sails unfurl'd,
 Steers into port, while to the laughing sky
 His streamers tell his triumph as they fly ;
 Expecting thousands line the crowded strand, 355
 Swell the glad voice, or wave the joyous hand,
 Pressing to view the sight their vows implor'd,
 And hail their glory and their strength restor'd :
 So the blest Beings of this smiling scene
 Flock'd round the car of their returning Queen. 360
 The radiant car, from which they now alight,
 Careful she gives to a selected Sprite,
 A Nymph of snowy vest and lovely frame,
 Fidelity her fair and spotless name ;
 Then, happy to review her hallow'd home 365
 Leads her sweet Guest to her celestial dome,

Gentlest of Powers ! for every purpose fit,
 To strengthen Wisdom, and embellish Wit ;—
 Thou whose soft arts, possess'd by thee alone,
 Can give to Virtue's voice a sweeter tone ; 370
 Allay the frost of Age, or fire of Youth,
 And lend attraction to severest Truth ;

Improve

Improve e'en Beauty by thy graceful ease,
 Or teach Deformity herself to please ;—
 Inspire the Bard, whose just ambition pants 375
 To guide weak mortals to thy heavenly haunts !
 Grant him, in notes that, like thy soft controul,
 Allure attention, and possess the soul ;
 Grant him to shew, in luminous display,
 The mystic wonders of thy secret sway ! 380

Now, at the sight of the presiding Power,
 Wide spread the gates of a stupendous tower,
 On whose firm height, commanding Nature's bound,
 The faithful warder of the fort they found,
 Wakeful Intelligence, a trusty Sprite, 385
 Whose eyes are piercing as the solar light,
 And ever on the watch to sound alarm,
 If aught of dusky hue, portending harm,
 Should, in defiance of her mandate, dare
 Approach the palace of th' imperial Fair. 390
 Within his ward, magnificently great,
 Lies the rich armoury that guards her state.
 Here stands Conviction's strong and lucid spear,
 Whose touch annihilates Suspense and Fear ;

Here,

Here, Truth's unfullied adamantinè shield, 395
 Which, save SOPHROSYNE, no Power can wield ;
 And Reason's trenchant blade of blazing steel,
 Its edge and polish form'd by friendly Zeal ;
 And, not less sure their destin'd mark to hit,
 Pointed by Virtue's hand, the shafts of Wit ; 400
 And Ridicule's strong bolt, whose stunning blow
 Lays towering Vice and fearless Folly low.
 Here too the Goddess kept, in mystic state,
 Those sweet rewards that on her champions wait,
 Guerdons more precious than triumphant palms :—
 The glance of Gratitude for mental alms, 406
 Peace's soft kiss, and Reconcilement's tear,
 And smiles of Sympathy, are treasur'd here.

These precincts past, now hand in hand they came
 To the rich fabric of majestic frame ; 410
 Instinct with joy their Sovereign to behold,
 The gates of massive adamant unfold ;
 And, as the gently-moving valves uncloze,
 Mysterious music from their motion flows ;
 The airy notes thro' all the palace roam, 415
 And dulcet echoes fill the festive dome :

A gorgeous hall amaz'd SERENA's eyes,
 Compar'd to which, in splendor, strength, and size,
 The noblest works of which Tradition sings,
 Judaic shrine, or seat of Memphian kings, 420
 Would seem more humble than the waxen cell
 In which the skilful Bee is proud to dwell,
 Here sits a Power, in whose angelic face
 Beauty is sweeten'd by maternal grace ;
 Her radiant seat, surpassing mortal art, 425
 Supports an emblem of her liberal heart,
 A Pelican, who rears her callow brood,
 And from her vitals seems to draw their food.
 Around this Spirit flock a filial host,
 Who bless her empire, and her guidance boast. 430
 Here every Science, all the Arts attend,
 In her they hail their parent and their friend ;
 Each to her presence brings the happy few,
 Whose dearest glory from her favour grew.
 Here, in her simple charms, with youthful fire, 435
 Proud to display the magic of her lyre,
 Soul-soothing Harmony presents her band :
 Beside her Orpheus and Amphion stand,

Here,

Here, mild Philosophy, whose thoughtful frown
 Is sweetly shaded by her olive crown, 440
 (In all her attic elegance array'd,
 Strong to convince, and gentle to persuade)
 To her, whose breath inspir'd his every rule,
 Leads the blest Sire of the Socratic school.
 Each animating Bard and moral Sage, 445
 The heaven-taught minds of every clime and age,
 Who soften'd manners, and refin'd the soul,
 Flock to this presence, as to Glory's goal ;
 And, as the mother's heart, that yearns to bless
 The rival innocents that round her press, 450
 Delights to see them, as her love they share,
 Sport in her sight, and flourish by her care ;
 Fondly responsive to their every call,
 Tender of each, and provident for all :
 So this sweet Image of Celestial Grace, 455
 Who sits encircled by her lovely race,
 To every Science vital strength imparts,
 And rears the circle of the Social Arts ;
 With such solicitude she gives to each,
 Pow'rs of sublimer aim and wider reach. 460

And

And now SOPHROSYNE, who near her prest,

Thus spoke her title to her earthly guest :—

“ Behold the honour’d Form, without whose aid

“ My strength must vanish, and my glory fade !

“ Source of my being, and my life’s support ! 465

“ EUNOIA call’d in this celestial Court,

“ BENEVOLENCE the name she bears on earth,

“ The guard of Weakness, and the friend of Worth.”

She ended : and the mild maternal Form

Embrac’d SERENA with a smile as warm 470

As the gay spirit Vegetation wears,

When she to crown her favourite Nymph prepares,

When, pleas’d her flowery treasures to display,

She pours them in the lap of youthful May.

But how, SERENA ! how may human speech 475

Thy heavenly raptures in this moment reach ?

If aught of earthly sentiment may vie

With the pure joy these happy scenes supply,

’Tis when, unmixt with trouble and with pain,

Love glides in secret thro’ the glowing vein ; 480

When some fond Youth, unconscious of its fire,

Free from chill Fear and turbulent Desire,

With

With every thought absorb'd in soft delight,
 Sees all creation in his Fair one's sight,
 And feels a blisful state without a name, 485
 Repose of soul with harmony of frame.

So, plung'd in pleasure of the purest kind,
 SERENA gaz'd on the maternal Mind ;
 Gaz'd till SOPHROSYNE's directing aid
 Thus summon'd to new fights th' obedient Maid :—
 " Haste, my fair Charge, for of this ample state, 491
 " Tracts yet unseen thy visitation wait.

" The pressing hours forbid me to unfold
 " Each separate province which these confines hold ;
 " But I will lead thee to that blisful crew, 495
 " Whose kindred spirits best deserve thy view."

So speaking, her attentive Guest she led
 Thro' scenes, that still increasing wonder bred.
 Where'er she trod, thro' all her gorgeous seat,
 Soft music echoed from beneath her feet : 500
 Passing a portal, on whose lucid stone
 Emblems of Innocence and Beauty shone,
 They reach a lawn with verdant lustre bright,
 And view the bowers of permanent delight.

No fiery Sun here forms a scorching noon, 505

No baleful Meteor gleams, no chilling Moon:

But, from a latent source, one soothing light,

Whose constant rays repel the mist of night,

Tho' tender, chearful, and tho' warm, serene,

Gives lasting beauty to the lovely scene. 510

No sensual thought this paradise profanes ;

For here tried Excellence in triumph reigns,

Benignant cares eternal joy supply,

And bliss angelic beams in every eye.

“ In yonder groups,” the leading Spirit cried, 515

“ My fav’rite Females see, my fairest pride.

“ The first in rank is that distinguish’d train,

“ Whose strength of soul was tried by Hymen’s chain :

“ Tho’ Beauty blest their form, and Love their guide,

“ Their nuptial band with happiest omens tied, 520

“ Beauty and Love, they felt, may lose the art

“ To fix inconstant Man’s eccentric heart ;

“ Yet, conscious of their Lord’s neglected vow,

“ No Virtue frown’d outrageous on their brow,

“ To keep returning Tenderness aloof, 525

“ By coarse upbraiding, and despis’d reproof :

“ With

" With Sorrow smother'd in Attraction's smile,
 " They strove the sense of misery to beguile ;
 " And, from wild Passion's perilous abyss,
 " Lure the lost wanderer back to faithful bliss. 530
 " See mild OCTAVIA o'er this band preside,
 " Voluptuous ANTONY's neglected bride,
 " Whose feeling heart, with all a Mother's care,
 " Rear'd the young offspring of a rival Fair.
 " Far other trials rais'd yon lovely crew, 535
 " Tho' in connubial scenes their merit grew :
 " It was their chance, ere judgment was mature,
 " When glittering toys the infant mind allure,
 " Following their parents' avaricious rule,
 " To wed, with hopes of bliss, a wealthy fool. 540
 " When Time remov'd Delusion's veil by stealth,
 " And shew'd the drear vacuity of wealth ;
 " When sad Experience prov'd the bitter fate
 " Of Beauty coupled to a senseless Mate,
 " These gentle Wives still gloried to submit ; 545
 " These, tho' invited by alluring Wit,
 " Refus'd in paths of lawless joy to range,
 " Nor murmur'd at the lot they could not change :

" But,

- “ But, with a lively sweetness, unopprest
 “ By a dull Husband’s lamentable jest, 550
 “ Their constant rays of gay good-humour spread
 “ A guardian glory round their idiot’s head.
 “ The next in order are those lovely Forms,
 “ Whose patience weather’d all paternal storms ;
 “ By filial cares, the mind’s unfailing test, 555
 “ Well have they earn’d these seats of blissful rest :
 “ They, unrepining at severe restraint,
 “ Peevish commands, and undeserv’d complaint ;
 “ Bent with unwearied kindness to appease
 “ Each fancied want of querulous Disease ; 560
 “ Gave up those joys which youthful hearts engage,
 “ To watch the weakness of parental age.
 “ Turn to this chearful band ; and mark in this,
 “ Spirits who justly claim my realms of bliss !
 “ Most lovely these ! when judg’d by generous
 Truth, 565
 “ Tho’ Beauty is not their’s, nor blooming Youth :
 “ For these are they, who, in Life’s thorny shade,
 “ Repin’d not at the name of ancient Maid.
 “ No proud disdain, no narrowness of heart,
 “ Held them from Hymen’s tempting rites apart ;

- " But fair Discretion led them to withdraw 571
 " From the priz'd honour of his proffer'd law ;
 " To quit the object of no hasty choice,
 " In mild submission to a Parent's voice ;
 " The valued Lover with a sigh resign, 575
 " And sacrifice Delight at Duty's shrine.
 " With smiles they bore, from angry spleen exempt,
 " Injurious mockery, and coarse contempt :
 " 'Twas their's to clasp, each selfish care above,
 " A sister's orphans with parental love, 580
 " And all her tender offices supply,
 " Tho' bound not by the strong maternal tie :
 " 'Twas their's to bid intestine quarrels cease,
 " And form the cement of domestic peace.
 " No throbbing joy their spotless bosom fir'd, 585
 " Save what Benevolence herself inspir'd ;
 " No praise they sought, except that praise refin'd,
 " Which the heart whispers to the worthy mind.
 " Such are these gentle tribes, the happy few
 " Who share the triumph to their victory due : 590
 " Angelic aims their spotless minds employ,
 " And fill their measure of unchequer'd joy.

" Behold !

“ Behold ! where some with generous ardor wait
 “ Around yon Seer, who holds the book of Fate ;
 “ Those awful leaves with eager glance they turn,
 “ Thence with celestial zeal they fondly learn 596
 “ What dangers threaten, thro’ the vale of earth,
 “ Their kindred pilgrims, ere they rise to birth :
 “ To earth they still invisibly descend,
 “ In that dark scene congenial minds defend, 600
 “ From Pleasure’s Buddrive Spleen’s corroding worm,
 “ And in my votaries’ heart my power confirm.

“ Delights more calm yon listening band employ,
 “ Who deeply drink of intellectual joy.
 “ See them around that speaking Nymph rejoice,
 “ Their pleasures varying with her varied voice ! 606
 “ What graces in the sweet enthusiast glow !
 “ Repeating here whate’er she learns below.
 “ Memory her name, her charge o’er earth to flit,
 “ And cull the fairest flowers of human wit. 610
 “ Whatever Genius, in his happiest hour,
 “ Has penn’d, of moral grace and comic power,
 “ To warm the heart, the spells of Spleen unbind,
 “ And pour gay sunshine o’er the misty mind ;

“ Teach men to cherish their fraternal tie, 615

“ And view kind Nature with a filial eye ;

“ This active Spirit catches in her flight,

“ Skill'd to retain, and happy to recite.

“ Here she delivers each bright work, and each

“ Derives new beauty from her graceful speech.

“ Warpt by no envy, by no love misled, 621

“ Equal she holds the living and the dead ;

“ Alike rehearsing, as they claim their turn,

“ The song of ANSTEY, and the tale of STERNE.

“ But Morning calls thee hence.—Yet one scene
more, 625

“ My fostering love shall lead thee to explore.

“ This, thy last sight, with careful eyes survey,

“ And mark th' extensive nature of my sway.”

Thus with fond zeal the guardian Spirit said,

And to new precincts of her palace led ; 630

The scene she enter'd of her richest state,

Where on her voice the subject Passions wait :

Here rose a throne of living gems, so bright

No breath could fully their benignant light ;

This,

This, her immortal feat, the gracious Guide 635
 Assum'd : her Ward stood wondering at her side.
 Swift as they felt their ruling Power inthron'd,
 Ætherial Beings, who her empire own'd,
 Crowded in glittering pomp the gorgeous scene,
 To pay their homage to their heavenly Queen. 640
 First came chaste Love, whose sweet harmonious
 form

Ne'er felt Suspicion's soul-convulsing storm ;
 No baleful arrow in his quiver lies,
 No blinding veil enwraps his sparkling eyes ;
 There all the rays of varied joy unite, 645
 And jointly shed unspeakable delight.
 With him was Friendship, like a virgin drest,
 The soft Asbestos form'd her simple vest,
 Whose wond'rous folds, in fiercest flames entire,
 Mock the vain ravage of consuming fire : 650
 Around this robe, a mystic chain she wore,
 Each golden link a star of diamonds bore ;
 Force could not tear the finish'd work apart,
 Nor Int'rest loose it by his subtlest art :

But, strange to tell, if the presiding Power, 655
 Who to her Favourite gave this precious dower,
 If kind SOPHROSUNE could fail to breathe
 Her vital virtue on this magic wreath,
 The parts must sever, faithless to their trust,
 The gold grow dross, and every diamond dust. 660
 These Valour follow'd, deck'd with verdant palm,
 Gracefully bold, majestically calm.
 A mingled troop succeed, with festive sound,
 Wisdom with olive, Wit with feathers crown'd ;
 Here, hand in hand they move, no longer foes, 665
 Their charms encreasing as their union grows ;
 Pure Spirits all, who hating mental strife,
 Exalt creation, and embellish life ;
 All here attend, and, in their Sovereign's praise,
 Their circling forms the song of glory raise. 670
 The blest SERENA drinks, with ravish'd ear,
 The melting music of the tuneful sphere.
 Now in its close the soothing echoes roll
 O'er her rapt fancy, and intrance her soul ;
 Her senses sink in soft Oblivion's bands, 675
 Till faithful Jenny at her pillow stands,

Recalls each mental and corporeal power,
 While she proclaims aloud the passing hour;
 And, in a voice expressive of surprize,
 Too shrill to seem the music of the skies,
 Informs the startled Fair 'tis time to rise.

680 }

END OF THE FIFTH CANTO.

C A N T O VI.

BLEST be the heart of sympathetic mould,
 Whatever form that gentle heart infold,
 Whose generous fibres with fond terror shake,
 When keen Affliction threatens to o'ertake
 Young artless Beauty, as alarm'd she strays 5
 Thro' the strange windings of this mortal maze!
 To such, SERENA, be thy story known,
 Whose bosom best can make thy lot their own,
 And, kindly sharing in thy trials past,
 Attend with sweet anxiety the last. 10
 The hour approaches, the tremendous hour,
 In whose dark moments deeper perils lower;
 Still so enwrap't in Pleasure's gay disguise,
 They lurk invisible to Caution's eyes;
 And, unsuspected by the Fair one, wait 15
 To cancel or confirm her blissful fate.

Her lively mind with bright ideas stor'd,
 She takes her station at the Breakfast-board;

Still

Still her soft soul the heavenly Vision fills,
 And sweeter graces in her smile instils; 20
 New hopes of triumph glide thro' every nerve,
 And arm her glowing heart with firm reserve;
 Conscious the final trying chance impends,
 To bear its force her every power she bends;
 In her quick thought ambitious to presage 25
 How Spleen's dark agents may exert their rage,
 She ponders on what perils may befall,
 And fondly deems her mind a match for all.
 Ah, lovely Nymph! this dangerous pride forego;
 Pride may betray—Security's thy foe. 30

While fancied Prudence thus, a foreign guest,
 Sits doubly cherish'd in SERENA's breast,
 Behold a billet her attention steal,
 No common arms compose its ample seal;
 Th' unfolding paper breathes a roseate scent, 35
 Sweet harbinger of joy, its kind intent.
 Of courteous FILLIGREE it bears the name,
 Clear symptom of the Peer's increasing flame!
 The gracious Earl, lamenting pleasure lost,
 And fair SERENA in her wishes crost, 40

Has

Has plann'd, in honour of the lovely Maid,
 A fancied Ball, a private Masquerade,
 And supplicates her Sire, with warm esteem,
 To smile indulgent on the festive scheme.
 All arts he uses to insure the grant, 45
 Nor leaves unask'd the eager maiden Aunt.
 Quick at the sound SERENA's glowing heart
 Throbs with gay hopes; but soon those hopes depart:
 Reflection, in her soul a faithful guard,
 The opening avenues of pleasure barr'd: 50
 She deem'd the plan of this delightful show,
 But the new ambush of her secret foe;
 The bliss too bright to realize, she guess'd,
 And chas'd th' idea from her guarded breast.
 While these discreet resolves her thought employ,
 Tranquil she triumphs o'er her smother'd joy. 56
 Not so the Knight—to his parental eyes,
 In dazzling pomp delusive visions rise:
 That Coronet, the object of his vow,
 He sees suspended o'er his daughter's brow; 60
 Eager he burns to snap the pendent thread,
 And fix the glory on his Darling's head.

Far wiser aims the ancient Maiden caught,
 No empty gew-gaw flutters in her thought ;
 But, while more keenly she applauds the plan, 65
 Her hope is solid and substantial Man ;
 Not for her infant Niece, whose baby frame
 She holds unfit for Hymen's holy flame ;
 But for her riper self, whose strength may bear
 The heaviest burden of connubial care. 70

Tho' different Phantoms dance before their sight,
 Niece, Aunt, and Father, in one wish unite,
 To join the banquet is their common choice,
 The business past with no dissenting voice ;
 And the warm Sire, in whom ambition burn'd, 75
 A note of grateful courtesy return'd :
 His billet seal'd, the glad good-humour'd Knight
 Launch'd forth, like Nestor, on his youthful might :—

“ O could I now, in spite of age, retain
 “ That active vigour, and that sprightly vein, 80
 “ Which led me once the lively laugh to raise
 “ Among the merrier Wits of former days,
 “ When rival Beauties would around me throng,
 “ And gay Ridottos listen to my song !

“ Such

“ Such were I now, as on the festive night, 85
 “ When Ch——h’s charms amaz’d the public sight;
 “ When the kind Fair one, in a veil so thin
 “ That the clear gauze was but a lighter skin,
 “ Mask’d like a virgin just prepar’d to die,
 “ Gave her plump beauties to each greedy eye ! 90
 “ On that fam’d night, (for then with frolic fire
 “ Youth fill’d my heart, and Humour strung my lyre)
 “ Pleas’d in the sunshine of her smile to bask,
 “ I danc’d around her in a Devil’s mask ;
 “ And idly chaunted an infernal ode, 95
 “ In praise of all this Female tempter shew’d.
 “ The jocund crowd, who throng’d with me to gaze,
 “ Extoll’d my unpremeditated lays,
 “ And Sport, who still of this old revel brags,
 “ * Styl’d her the first of Maids, and me of Wags.
 “ Then a light Devil, now, reduc’d to limp, 101
 “ I am but fit to play the hag-born Imp ;
 “ Still, not to cross the frolic of this Ball,
 “ Still as the Tortoise Caliban I’ll crawl,

* Οὐδὲν Διί, Νέστορι τ’ ἀνδρῶν.

See Nestor’s Speech in the 11th Iliad.

“ And

“ And if with Gout my burning ankles flinch, 105

“ I’ll call it Prospero’s tormenting pinch ;

“ Still in this shape I’ll shew them what I am,

“ And PEN. shall go as Sycorax, my dam.”

So spoke the Knight ; and spoke with so much
weight,

The listening Females saw his word was fate ; 110

For ne’er did Jove with so resolv’d a brow

To smiling Love his joyous scheme avow,

When he concerted, for his special mirth,

A masquerading on the stage of earth,

And of the Swan’s soft plume, or Bull’s rough hair,

Order’d the Fancy-dress he chose to wear. 116

From whence let sapient Antiquarians shew

The ancient use of Masquerades below.

SERENA smil’d to see this joyous fire

Infuse new youth in her determin’d Sire ; 120

But mute PENELOPE, with half a sigh,

“ With one auspicious and one dropping eye,”

Heard the firm Knight his fixt resolve impart,

Tickling at once and torturing her heart.

The Ball she relish’d, but abhorr’d the task 125

To hide her beauties in a Beldam’s mask :

Miranda’s

Miranda's name would better suit her plan,
 A simple Maiden, not afraid of Man ;
 But us'd, alas ! her Brother's law to feel,
 She knows that law admits not of repeal. 130
 Trusting her charms will any garb enrich,
 She deigns to take the habit of a Witch.
 Never did Sorcerers in the shades of night
 Try to illuminate a filthy Sprite
 With fonder efforts, or with worse success, 135
 Than PEN. now labour'd, in this wayward dress,
 To give the sprightly shew of living truth
 To the poor ghost of her departed youth.
 As Witches o'er their magic cauldron bend,
 Anxious to see their menial Imps ascend ; 140
 So in her glass the ancient Maiden pries,
 And dreams new graces in her person rise.
 No such delights, whose dear delusions please,
 The mild SERENA in her mirror sees ;
 She, at whose toilet Beauty's latent Queen 145
 Attends, enchanted with her filial mien,
 And o'er her Favourite's unconscious face
 Breathes her own roseate glow and vivid grace.
 She

She hastes her glittering garments to adjust,
 With all the modest charms of sweet distrust, 150
 Doubting that beauty, which she doubts alone,
 Which dazzles every eye except her own.
 The native diffidence which sway'd her mind,
 Now feels new terrors with its own combin'd;
 The robes of Ariel to the Nymph recall 155
 Those disappointments that may yet befall;
 As her fair hands the gauze or tissue touch,
 They fondly warn her not to hope too much.
 She feels the friendly counsel they impart,
 And Caution reigns protector of her heart. 160

The fateful evening comes—the coach attends,
 And first the gouty Caliban ascends;
 Then, in Deformity's well-suited pride,
 Sour Sycorax is station'd by his side;
 And last, with sportive smiles, divinely sweet, 165
 Light Ariel perches on the vacant seat.
 Fancy now paints the scene of pleasure near,
 Yet fluttering Gaiety is check'd by Fear.
 Her wish to view the festive fight runs high;
 But the fond Nymph remembers, with a sigh, 170

From

From Hope's keen hand the cup of joy may slip,
 And fall untasted, though it reach the lip.
 As the fine Artist, whose nice toils aspire
 To fame eternal by encaustic fire ;
 If he, with grief, has seen the faithless heat 175
 Mar the rich labour it should make compleat,
 When next his hands, with trembling care, confide
 To the fierce element his pencil's pride,
 Watches unceasing the pernicious flame,
 Terror and Hope contending in his frame, 180
 While his fair work the dangerous fire sustains,
 Feels it in all his sympathetic veins,
 And at each trivial sound that Chance may cause,
 Hears the Gem crack, and sees its cruel flaws :
 With such solicitude the panting Maid 185
 Past the long street, of every noise afraid.
 Now, while around her rival flambeaus flare,
 And the coach rattles thro' the crowded square,
 She fears some dire mischance must yet befall,
 Some Demon snatch her from the promis'd Ball ;
 And dreams no trial more severe than this, 191
 So bright she figures the new scene of bliss :

Yet,

Yet, horrid as it seems, her heart is bent
To bear e'en this, and bear it with content.

But, whirl'd at length within the Porter's gate,
She thinks what perils at the Ball may wait; 196
And, as she now alights, the fluttering Fair
Invokes her Guardian to protect her there,
Till thoughts of danger, thoughts of caution, fly
Before the magic blaze that meets her eye. 200

Th' advancing Nymph, at every step she takes,
Pants with amazement, doubtful if she wakes;
Far as her eyes the glittering scene command,
'Tis all enchantment, all a Fairy land;
No vestiges of modern pomp appear, 205

No modern melody salutes her ear :

With Moorish notes the echoing mansion rings,

And its transmuted form to Fancy brings

The rich * Alhambra of the Moorish kings. }

The Peer, who keenly thirsts for Fashion's praise,

To gild his revel with no common rays, 211

Summon'd his modish Architect, whose skill

Can all the wishes of Caprice fulfil.

* See the Views of this Palace in Swinburn's Travels.

His genius, equal to the wildest task,
Gave to the house itself a Gothic mask. 215

The Chaplain, that no guest might feel neglect,
As a Magician of the Arab sect,
Wav'd a presiding wand throughout the Ball,
And well provided for the wants of all.

The Peer himself, his prowess to evince, 220

Shines in the semblance of a Moorish Prince ;
And round the brilliant mimic Hero wait

All pomp and circumstance of Moorish state :

Thro' all his splendid dome no eye could find
Aught unembellish'd, save the Master's mind. 225

There, tho' repress'd by Courtesy's controul,
Lurks the low mover of the little soul,

Mean Vanity ; whose slave can never prove
The heart-refining flame of genuine love.

While her cold joys his abject mind amuse, 230

His thoughts are busied on connubial views.

His house compleat, its decorations plac'd

By the sure hand of fashionable Taste,

He only wants, to crown his modish life,

That last and finest moveable—a Wife. 235

She

She too must prove, to fix his coy desire,
 Such as the eye of Fashion will admire.
 His Ball is but a jury, to decide
 Upon the merit of his fancied Bride.
 If sweet SERENA, on this signal night, 240
 Shines the first idol of the public fight ;
 If Gallantry's fixt eyes pronounce her fair,
 By the sure sign of one unceasing stare ;
 And if, prophetic of her nobler doom,
 Each rival Beauty shudders at her bloom ; 245
 The die is cast—he weds—the point is clear ;
 She cannot flight the vows of such a Peer.
 Thus argued in his mind the festive Earl,
 And, lest he lightly chuse an awkward Girl,
 Wisely conven'd, on this important case, 250
 Each fashionable judge of Female grace.
 Here Beaux Esprits in various figures lurk,
 Of Jew and Gentile, Bramin, Tartar, Turk ;
 But of the manly Masks, a youthful Bard
 Seem'd most to challenge Beauty's soft regard : 255
 Adorn'd with native elegance, he wore,
 In simplest form, the minstrel dress of yore :

They call him EDWIN, who around him throng,
 EDWIN, immortaliz'd in BEATTIE'S song;
 And, sooth to say, within a comely frame, 260
 He bore a heart that answer'd to the name;
 For this neat habit deck'd a generous Youth,
 Of gentlest manners, and sincerest truth.
 Tho' on his birth propitious Fortune smil'd,
 No proud parental folly spoil'd the Child; 265
 And Genius, more beneficently kind,
 Blest with superior wealth his manly mind.
 Of years he barely counted twenty-one;
 But, like a brilliant morn, his opening life begun.
 Fain would the Muse on this her votary dwell, 270
 And fully paint the Youth she loves so well;
 His figure's charms, the music of his tongue,
 What Nymphs his lays allur'd, what lays he sung:
 But higher cares her rambling song controul;
 SERENA'S perils summon all her soul; 275
 For Spleen, ambitious to exert her force,
 Conscious this trial is her last resource,
 Most keenly bent on her pernicious task,
 Has shifted round the Ball from mask to mask,
 Watching

Watching the moment, with infernal care, 280 }
 To form with deepest art her final snare, }
 And manacle the mind of the unguarded Fair.

It comes, the moment that must fix her lot,
 By her, ah thoughtless Maid ! by her forgot ;
 Tho' the light Hours, e'en in their frolic ring, 285
 Trembling perceive the fearful chance they bring,
 And, shuddering at the Nymph's terrific state,
 Seem anxious to suspend her doubtful fate.

Now social Ease the place of Sport supplied, }
 The hot oppressive mask was thrown aside, 290 }
 And Beauty shone reveal'd in all her blushing }
 pride.

Superior still in features as in form,
 With admiration flush'd, with pleasure warm,
 The gay SERENA every eye allur'd ;
 The hearts her figure won her face secur'd : 295
 A tender sweetness still the Nymph maintain'd,
 And Modesty o'er all her graces reign'd.
 Well might her soul to brilliant hopes incline,
 A thousand Youths had call'd her charms divine ;
 A thousand friends had whisper'd in her ear, 300
 That Fate had mark'd her for the festive Peer.

Her youthful fancy, tho' by pomp amus'd,
 Wish'd not those offers, which her heart refus'd :
 That tender heart, by no vain pride possest,
 With indecisive trembling shook her breast, 305
 Like a young bird, that, fluttering in the air,
 Wishes to build her nest, yet knows not where.

The busy Earl, his puny love to raise,
 Hunted the circling whisper of her praise ;
 Heard Envy own her lovely charms, tho' loth, 310
 Heard Taste attest them with a modish oath ;
 And, nuptial projects thickening in his mind,
 Now his fair partner in the dance rejoin'd.
 As now the sprightly music paus'd, my Lord
 Eager resolv'd to touch a softer chord ; 315
 Secure of all repulse, he vainly meant
 Half to display, half hide his fond intent,
 And, in dissembled Passion's flowery tropes,
 To sport at leisure with the Virgin's hopes :
 For this he fram'd a motley speech, replete 320
 With amorous compliment and vain conceit.
 The labour'd nothing with complacent pride
 He spoke ; but to his speech no Nymph replied :

For

For in the moment, the lost Fair devotes
 Her willing ear to more attractive notes. 325
 The Minstrel happen'd near the Nymph to walk,
 Rapt with a bosom-friend in secret talk,
 And, at the instant when the Earl began
 Half to unfold his matrimonial plan,
 EDWIN, in whispers, from the crowd retir'd, 330
 Chanc'd to repeat the Sonnet she inspir'd :
 The sounds, tho' faint, her recollection caught,
 Drew her quick eye, and fixt her wondering thought.
 Lost in this sweet surprize, she could not hear
 A single accent of the amorous Peer. 335
 Spleen saw the moment that she sought to gain,
 And perch'd triumphant on the Noble's brain.
 With jealous Envy stung, and baffled Pride,
 "Contemptuous Girl !" with sudden rage he cried,
 "If here to happier Youths thy views incline, 340
 "I want not fairer Nymphs who challenge mine.
 "Thy breast in vain with penitence may burn ;
 "But, once neglected, I no more return."
 Thus loudly speaking, with distemper'd heat,
 Rudely he turn'd, with rancorous scorn replete.

SERENA, startled at th' injurious sound, 346

Survey'd th' insulting Peer, who sternly frown'd ;

Shame and resentment thro' her bosom rush,

Swell every vein, and raise the burning blush.

Love, new-born Love, but in its birth conceal'd,

Nor to the Nymph herself as yet reveal'd, 351

And just Disdain, and Anger's honest flame,

With complicated power convulse her frame :

Contending Passions every thought confound,

And in tumultuous doubt her soul is drown'd. 355

Now treacherous Pride, who tempts her tongue to
trip,

Forms to a keen reply her quivering lip :

Insidious Spleen now hovers o'er the Fair,

Deems her half lock'd within her hateful snare ;

In her new slave preparing to rejoice, 360

To taint her spirit, and untune her voice.

Hapless SERENA ! what can save thee now ?

The Fiend's dark signet stamps thy clouded brow,

In thy swollen eye I see the starting drop ;

This fatal shower, ætherial Guardian ! stop : 365

Haste to thy votary, haste, her soul sustain,

Nor let the trials she has past be vain.

Ah me ! while yet I speak, with shuddering dread
 I hear the magic Girdle's bursting thread.
 This horrid omen, ye kind Powers ! avert : 370
 Nor thou, bright Zone ! thy brighter Charge desert.
 Ah, fruitless prayer ! her panting breast behold !
 See ! the gauze shakes in many a ruffled fold !
 Forc'd from their station by her heaving heart,
 From the strain'd Girdle thrice three spangles start :
 Thro' her disorder'd drefs a pass they've found, 376
 And fallen, see, they glitter on the ground !
 O blessed chance ! with life-recalling light
 The glittering monitors attract her sight !
 Like stars emerging from the darken'd pole, 380
 They sparkle safety to her harrass'd soul.
 See ! from her brow the clouds of trouble fly,
 Vexation's tear is vanish'd from her eye !
 Her rosy cheeks with Joy's soft radiance burn,
 Like Nature smiling at the Sun's return ; 385
 The Nymph, no more with mental darkness blind,
 Shines the sweet Ruler of her rescu'd mind.
 Hence, hateful Spleen ! thy fancied prize resign,
 Renounce for ever what shall ne'er be thine ;
 For,

For, conscious of her airy Guardian's aid, 390
 She feels new spirit thro' her heart convey'd,
 And, inly blessing this victorious hour,
 Her soul exults in its recover'd power.
 In such mild terms she hails th' insulting Peer,
 As Spleen, if mortal, must expire to hear; 395
 But, driven for ever from the lovely Girl,
 The foul Fiend riots in the captive Earl.
 He answers not; but, with a fullen air,
 On happier EDWIN, who approach'd the Fair,
 Darts such a glance of rage and envious hate, 400
 As Satan cast on Eden's blissful state,
 When on our Parents first he fixt his sight,
 And undelighted gaz'd on all delight :
 So doom'd to look, and doom'd such pangs to feel,
 Scornful he turn'd on his elastic heel. 405

“ O lovely Mildness ! oh angelic Maid !

“ Deserving homage, tho' to scorn betray'd ;

“ Rise still, sweet Spirit, rise these wrongs above,

“ Turn from injurious Pride to faithful Love ;

“ Tho'

“ Tho’ on my brow no Coronet may shine, 410
 “ Wealth I can offer at thy beauty’s shrine,
 “ And, worthier thee, a heart that worships
 thine.”

Thus, with new-kindled Love’s aspiring flame,
 Spoke the fond Youth conceal’d by EDWIN’s name,
 The gallant FALKLAND, rich in inborn worth, 415
 By Fortune blest, and not of abject birth.

Warmly he spoke, with that indignant heat
 With which the generous heart ne’er fails to beat,
 When Worth insulted wakens virtuous ire,
 And injur’d Beauty sets the soul on fire. 420

Quick to his voice the startled Virgin turn’d,
 With wonder, hope, and joy, her bosom burn’d;
 With sweet confusion, flurried and amaz’d,
 On his attractive form she wildly gaz’d.

Full on her thought the friendly visions rush’d; 425
 Blushing she view’d him, view’d him still and
 blush’d;

And, soft Affection quickening at the sight,
 Perchance had swoon’d with fullness of delight,
 But that her Father’s voice, with quick controul,
 Recall’d the functions of her fainting soul. 430

When on the distant seat, where, fondly fixt,
 He view'd the Nymph as in the dance she mixt,
 He indistinctly heard, with wounded ear,
 The spleenful outrage of the angry Peer.
 Swift at th' imperfect sound, with choler wild, 435
 He sprung to succour his insulted Child ;
 But ere his fury into language broke,
 Love calm'd the storm that Arrogance awoke.
 The sudden burst of FALKLAND's tender flame,
 His winning manners, his distinguish'd name, 440
 His liberal soul, by Fortune's smile carest,
 All join'd to harmonize the Father's breast.
 His fiery thoughts subside in glad surprize,
 And to the generous Youth he warmly cries :
 " Ingenuous FALKLAND ! by thy frankness won,
 " My willing heart would own thee as my Son ; 446
 " But on thy hopes SERENA must decide : —
 " Haste we together from this house of Pride."

So spoke the Sire ; for, to her Votary kind,
 SOPHROSYLE inspir'd his soften'd mind. 450
 Speaking, he smil'd, to see that on his word
 The Lover hung, and blest the sounds he heard ;

That

That his embarrass'd Child his sentence caught
 With each tumultuous sign of tender thought;
 Whose blushes, springing from the heart, declare 455
 The dawn of fondness in the modest Fair.

Th' enchanted Youth with ecstasy convey'd
 Forth from the troubled Feast the trembling Maid.

As the keen Sailor, whom his daring soul
 Has drawn, too vent'rous, near the freezing pole;
 Who, having slighted Caution's tame advice, 461
 Seems wedg'd within impervious worlds of ice;
 If, from each chilling form of peril free,
 At length he reach the unincumber'd sea,
 With joy superior to his transient pain, 465
 Rushes, exulting, o'er th' expansive main:
 Such strong delight SERENA's bosom shar'd,
 When sweet Reflection to her heart declar'd,
 That all the trials of her Fate were past,
 And Love's decisive plaudit seal'd the last. 470
 Her airy Guard prepares the softest down,
 From Peace's wing, to line the nuptial crown:
 Her smiles accelerate the bridal morn,
 And clear her Votary's path from every thorn.

On the quick match the Prude's keen censures fall,
Blind to the heavenly Power who guided all : 476

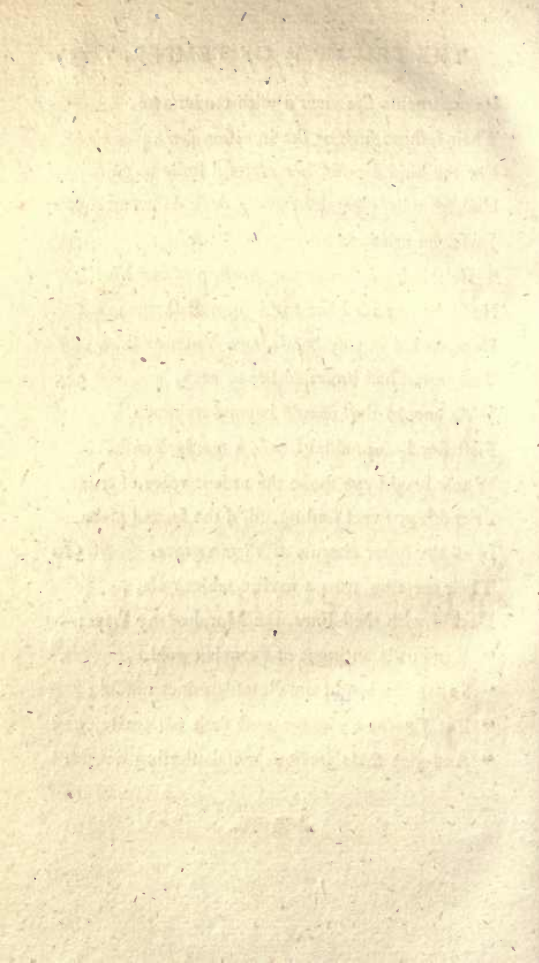
But mild SERENA scorn'd the prudish play,
To wound warm Love with frivolous delay ;
Nature's chaste child, not Affectation's slave,
The heart she meant to give, she frankly gave. 480
Thro' her glad Sire no gouty humours run,
Jocund he glories in his destin'd Son.

PENELOPE herself, no longer seen
In the sour semblance of tormenting Spleen,
Buys for her Niece the robes of nuptial state, 485
Nor scolds the Mercer once thro' all the long debate.
For quick dispatch, the honest Man of law
Toils half the night the legal ties to draw :
At length th' enraptur'd Youth, all forms compleat,
Bears his sweet Bride to his paternal seat ; 490
On a fair lawn the chearful mansion stood,
And high behind it rose a circling wood.
As the blest Lord of this extensive reign
Led his dear partner thro' her new domain,
With fond surprize, SERENA soon descried 495
A temple rais'd to her ætherial Guide.

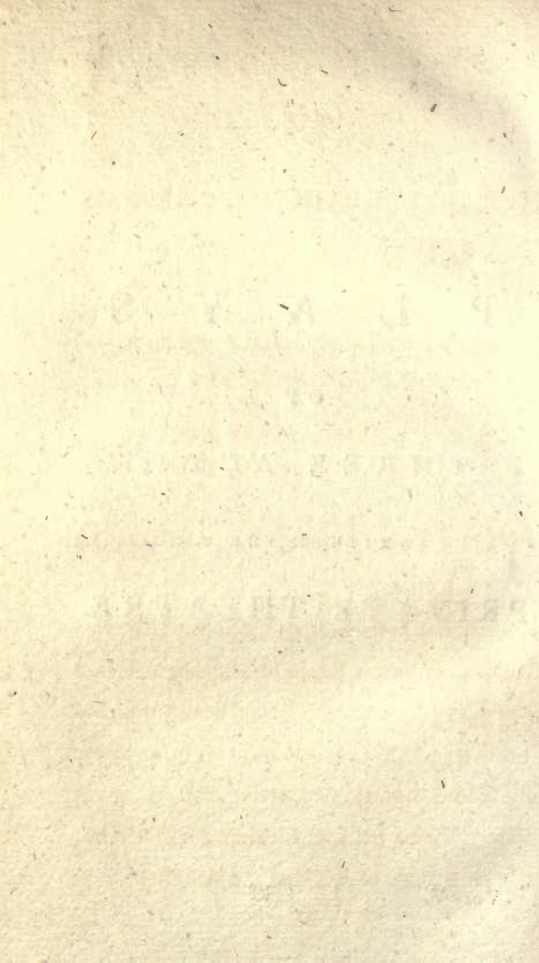
Its

Its ornaments she view'd with tender awe,
 Their fashion such as she in vision saw ;
 For the kind Youth, her grateful smile to gain,
 Had, from her clear description, deck'd the fane. 500
 Joyful he cried, to his angelic Wife,
 " Be this kind Power the worship of our life !"
 He spoke ; and led her to the inmost shrine ;
 Here, link'd in rosy bands, two Votaries shine ;
 The pencil had imparted life to each, 505
 With energy that seem'd beyond its reach.
 First stood Connubial Love, a manly Youth,
 Whose bright eye spoke the ardent vows of truth ;
 Friendship, sweet smiling, fill'd the second place,
 In all the softer charms of Virgin grace. 510
 Their meeting arms a mystic tablet raise,
 Deck'd with these lines, the Moral of my Lays :—
 " VIRTUE's an ingot of Peruvian gold,
 " SENSE the bright ore Potosi's mines unfold ;
 " But TEMPER's image must their use create, 515
 " And give these precious metals sterling weight."





P L A Y S
OF
THREE ACTS;
WRITTEN FOR A
PRIVATE THEATRE.



T O
HER GRACE THE DUTCHESS OF
D E V O N S H I R E.

*Non perch' io creda bisognar miei carmi
A chi se ne fa copia da se stessa;
Ma sol per soddisfare a questo mio
Che ho d' onorarla e di lodar disio.*

ARIOSTO, Canto xxxvii.

THE Great and Fair, in every age and
clime,

Receive free homage from the Sons of Rhyme:
Bend, ye ambitious Bards, at Grandeur's shrine!
Be Power your patron! Wit and Beauty mine!—
To thee, whom elegance has taught to please
By serious dignity, or sportive ease;
Whom Virtue hails, at Pleasure's festive rites,
Chaste Arbiter of Art's refin'd delights:

To thee, fair DEVON! I breathe this votive
strain;

Nor dread th' averted ear of proud Disdain;
For O, if music has not blest my lyre,
A lovelier spirit of th' ætherial choir,
Joy-breathing Gratitude, that hallow'd guest,
Who fires with heavenly zeal the human breast,
Bids my weak voice her swelling note prolong,
And consecrate to thee her tributary song.

When first my anxious Muse's fav'rite child,
Her young SERENA, artless, simple, wild,
Presum'd from privacy's safe scenes to fly,
And met in giddy haste the public eye;
Thy generous praise her trembling youth sus-
tain'd,
The smile she dar'd not ask, from thee she gain'd;
And found a guardian in the gracious DEVON,
Kind as the regent of her fancied heaven.—
The flatter'd Muse, whose offspring thou hast
blest,

In the fond pride that rules a parent's breast,

Presents thus boldly to thy kind embrace
 This little group of her succeeding race.
 Blest ! if by pathos true to Nature's law,
 From thy soft bosom they may haply draw
 Those tender sighs, that eloquently shew
 The virtues of the heart from whence they
 flow !

Blest ! if by foibles humorously hit,
 In the light scenes that aim at comic wit,
 They turn thy pensive charms to mirthful
 grace,

And wake the sprightly sweetness of thy face !

While thus the proud Enthusiast would
 aspire

To change thy beauties with her changing lyre ;
 Much as she wants the talent and the right,
 To shew thy various charms in varied light,
 O might the Muse, intruding on thy bower,
 From her fair Patron catch the magic power
 Frequent to meet the public eye, and still
 That fickle eye with fond amazement fill !

Let her, if this vain wish is lost in air,
 Breathe from her grateful heart a happier
 prayer!—

Howe'er her different fables may give birth
 To fancied woe, and visionary mirth;
 May all thy griefs belong to Fiction's reign,
 And wound thee only with a pleasing pain!
 May thy light spirit, on the sea of life,
 Elude the rocks of care, the gusts of strife,
 And safely, as the never-sinking buoy,
 Float on th' unebbing flood of real joy!

EARTHAM,
 January 29th, 1784.

W. HAYLEY.

P R E F A C E.

AS the following Plays were intended only for a private theatre, I have been tempted by that circumstance to introduce a kind of novelty into our language, by writing three comedies in rhyme, though the Comic Muse of our country has been long accustomed to express herself in prose, and her custom has the sanction of settled precept, and successful example. The Antiquarian, indeed, may remind me that Gammer Gurton's Needle, one of the earliest of our old plays, with other comic productions of that rude period, was written in rhyme; and possibly some fastidious enemies of that Gothic jingle, as they affect to call it, may consider the present Publication as nothing more than a relapse into the most barbarous mode of dramatic composition.

For the boldness of an attempt, which has no modern precedent to plead in its behalf, some apology may be due to the Public.

In the first place, I beg it may not be supposed, that by writing a comedy in rhyme, I mean to convey an in-

direct censure on the contrary practice. No one can prize more highly than I do the many excellent comedies in prose, with which our language is enriched. I am very far from entertaining a wish to overturn the ceremonial which the Comic Muse of England has established; but I hope to find our country as much a friend to toleration in the forms of literature, as in those of religion. The custom of other enlightened nations, both ancient and modern, may be pleaded on this occasion in behalf of verse. Aristophanes, in his play of the Clouds, seems to pride himself on his poetry. Ariosto having written two comedies in prose, converted them both into metre at a maturer period of his life; and Moliere, the unrivalled master of the French comic theatre, who has written admirably both in prose and rhyme, is, I think, most admirable, and most truly comic, when he adheres to the latter.

To the author who attempts a comedy in English rhyme, our language seems to offer an advantage, which the French poet did not enjoy. The Comic Muse of France has chiefly confined herself to that structure of verse, which belongs equally to her Tragic Sister. In the poetry of our nation, this particular measure is appropriated to sportive subjects, and though hitherto not used in Comedy, it possesses to an English ear a very comic vivacity. That it is highly calculated for poems of wit and humour, we have a striking proof in that
most

most exquisite production the Bath Guide. How far it may succeed through the varied scenes of an English play, experiment only can determine. As some readers, on the first sight of a comedy in rhyme, may hastily suppose that the fashion and the materials of the work are borrowed from the Theatre of France, I think it proper to declare, in justice to the writers of that country, that they are by no means answerable for any defects which may be found in these dramatic performances. I am not conscious of having borrowed a single character or situation from any comic writer whatever, either foreign or domestic.—The first of the three comedies, contained in the present Publication, was founded on a real anecdote related to me by an intimate friend, who, concealing the names of the parties, mentioned their ludicrous adventure as a new and tempting subject for the Comic Muse.—The plan of the second arose in the mind of its author, from his remarking the various effects of Connoisseurship in different characters. An attachment to the fine arts, which is allowed to refine and strengthen the virtues of a manly and a generous spirit, has perhaps a peculiar tendency not only to shew, but to increase the narrowness of a vain and feeble mind; and if such a tendency exists, it is the province of a comic writer to counteract and correct it.—The aim of the third comedy in this collection is to laugh at two distinct species of affectation,

very

very prevalent in our age and country ; the affectation of refined sentiment, and the affectation of pompous and pedantic expression. I protest however against personal application : and, to guard against it, let me declare, that this ridicule is levelled, not at the great and respectable Veteran in the field of literature, whose phrases may sometimes be borrowed by a character in the play ; but at the nameless and servile herd of his awkward imitators.—Vigor and originality of thought give a sanction to the pomp and peculiarity of his language. If singularities of style are united with genius and moral excellence, they are properly regarded with a partial respect ; but when these singularities are preposterously copied, and seem to prevail as a fashion, they become, I apprehend, very fair subjects of sportive satire.

When I reflect what long and established prejudice a rhyming play must encounter—when I remember that even Dryden himself, the most able advocate, and the greatest master of rhyme in our language, has expressly condemned the use of it in comedy—I am alarmed at the hardness of my attempt ; but when I recollect that time, the most infallible test of literary opinion, has fully shewn the mistake of that immortal Poet, in recommending the use of rhyme in English Tragedy, I am inclined to hope that he might be equally mistaken in supposing it utterly unsuited to our Comic Muse. It may be urged indeed, with great truth, that a comedy

*in rhyme cannot be so close a copy of Nature as a comedy in prose, the latter adhering to the very language of common life. But from a sister-art we may borrow, at least a plausible argument in favour of Poetry, on the present occasion. The great master, who has descanted so happily on the principles of Painting, observes with great propriety, in one of his discourses, that “ we are “ not always pleased with the most absolute possible resemblance of an imitation to its original object: cases “ may exist, in which such a resemblance may be even “ disagreeable. I shall only observe, that the effect of “ figures in wax-work, though certainly a more exact “ representation than can be given by painting or sculpture, is a sufficient proof that the pleasure we receive “ from imitation is not increased merely in proportion “ as it approaches to minute and detailed reality: we “ are pleased, on the contrary, by seeing ends answered “ by seeming inadequate means *.”—On these principles, which perhaps are equally just in the two kindred arts, a comedy in Rhyme may be still more entertaining than a comedy, of equal merit in other points, which confines itself to prose; and a critic who exclaims against the unnatural effect of a rhyming dialogue, may as justly censure a portrait on canvass, because it is not so exact a copy of life, as an image of coloured wax. In both cases, the artist, whether painter or poet, may be*

* Sir Joshua Reynolds' Discourse of December 1782.

justly called a true and a pleasing copier of Nature, if he preserves as high a degree of resemblance, as his mode of imitation will admit, and embellishes his work with the attractive and almost indispensable graces of ease, spirit, and freedom.

It is said by Voltaire of theatrical composition in general, "Tous les genres sont bons hors le genre ennuyeux." If the present comedies fall not within the class which that lively Writer has so justly proscribed, the Author may be allowed to hope, that his liberal and enlightened readers will look with indulgence on a Publication, which arose from his wish to introduce a striking, and he trusts not a blamable, variety into the amusements of English literature.

THE

HAPPY PRESCRIPTION;

OR, THE

LADY RELIEVED FROM HER LOVERS:

A COMEDY, IN RHYME.

Persons of the Drama.

SIR NICHOLAS ODDFISH,
SAPPHIC,
DECISIVE,
MORLEY,
COLONEL FELIX,
JONATHAN, Servant to MORLEY;

SELINA, Niece to SIR NICHOLAS,
MRS. FELIX, her Cousin, and Wife to the
COLONEL,
JENNY, Servant to SELINA.

Servants of SIR NICHOLAS, &c.

SCENE *the Country Mansion of the ODDFISH Family.*

THE
HAPPY PRESCRIPTION;

A C T I.

S C E N E I.

*Enter Sir Nicholas, in debate with Mrs. Felix
and Selina.*

MRS. FELIX.

WHAT a strange declaration!—it gives me the
spleen;

But 'tis what good Sir Nicholas never can mean.

SIR NICHOLAS.

Not mean it, fair Lady!—by Jupiter, yes!

And my project, you'll see, will be crown'd with success;

I am joyous myself, and 'tis ever my plan

To give those I love all the joy that I can.

MRS.

MRS. FELIX.

We own it—but joy is like diet, dear Cousin,
One palate mayn't relish what pleases a dozen ;
Nor will I allow that my appetite's vicious,
If perchance I don't like, what you think most delicious.

SIR NICHOLAS.

Rare dainty distinctions !—But can I believe
That a woman e'er liv'd, since the wedding of Eve,
Whose heart (tho' most coyly her head might be carried)

Did not fervently wish to be speedily married ?
Not to wound your nice ears with the name of desires
Which youth renders lovely, and nature inspires,
Your sex, from its weakness, demands a defender,
Whom pride and affection make watchful and tender ;
And if my fair Coz is no hypocrite grown,
The truth of my maxims you'll honestly own ;
While the wars from your arms the brave Colonel detain,
Is the want of a husband the source of no pain ?

MRS. FELIX.

There, indeed, you have touch'd me a little too near,
My Soldier, you know, to my soul is most dear ;
I own—and my frankness you never will blame,
I'd purchase his presence with aught but his fame.

SIR

SIR NICHOLAS.

Well said, thou dear, honest, and warm-hearted wife ;
 For thy truth may good angels still watch o'er his life,
 And while others the rough field of slaughter are tread-
 ing,

Send him home full of glory, to dance at our wedding !
 For a wedding we'll have to enliven us all,
 And Hymen's bright altar shall warm the old hall.
 For my Niece ere I die 'tis my wish to provide,
 And ere two months are past I *will* see her a bride.
 I'm resolv'd—and you know that my neighbours all say,
 Sir Nicholas Oddfish will have his own way.

MRS. FELIX.

Selina, dear Sir, wants no other protection,
 While her life glides in peace by your gentle direction.
 She thinks, and, I own, I approve her remark,
 In conjugal cares 'tis too soon to embark :
 Her bosom untouch'd by Love's dangerous dart,
 Fate has not yet shewn her the man of her heart.

SIR NICHOLAS.

The man of her heart !—these nonsensical fancies
 You light-headed females pick out of romances.
 That I am no tyrant you know very well,
 So, Cousin, don't teach my good Niece to rebel !

I am no greedy guardian, who thinks it his duty
 On the altar of Plutus to sacrifice beauty ;
 Whose venal barbarity, justly abhorr'd,
 Ties a lovely young girl to an old crippled lord,
 And basely, to gain either rank or estate,
 Makes her swear she will love, what she cannot but hate.
 From such a protector Heaven guard my dear Niece !
 I wish her to wed that her joys may increase ;
 And the deuce must be in the strange girl who disco-
 vers

No man to her mind in such plenty of lovers.
 To no very great length will my cruelty run,
 If from twenty admirers I bid her chuse one.

MRS. FELIX.

But why, dear Sir Nicholas, why in such haste ?

SIR NICHOLAS.

'Tis thus that my projects are ever disgrac'd
 With the false names of hurry and precipitation,
 Because I abhor silly procrastination ;
 That thief of delight, who deludes all our senses,
 Who cheats us for ever with idle pretences,
 By whom, like the dog in the fable, betray'd,
 We let go the substance to snap at the shade.

To

To seize present time is the true art of life ;
'Tis Time who now cries, make Selina a wife !
The season is come, I've so long wish'd to see
From the moment I dandled her first on my knee :
She, you know, to my care was bequeath'd by my
Brother,

And having this child, I ne'er wish'd for another :
Thro' life I have kept myself single for her ;
Her interest, her joy, to my own I prefer.

SELINA.

Your kindness, dear Sir, I can never repay.

SIR NICHOLAS.

In truth, my dear damsel, you easily may ;
I demand no return so enormously great ;
I ask but a boy to possess my estate.

SELINA.

Lord, Uncle, how come such odd thoughts in your
head ?

MRS. FELIX.

From his heart, I assure you—'tis pleasantly said ;
A fair stipulation—both parties agreed,
The compact, I trust, in due time will succeed :
But patience, dear Knight, you will have your desire,
Nor wait very long for a young little 'squire.

SIR NICHOLAS.

The cold stream of Patience ne'er creeps in my veins,
 But the wish my heart forms my quick spirit attains.
 I'm none of your chill atmospherical wretches,
 Whose affections are subject to starts and to catches;
 Whose wish, like a weather-cock, veering about,
 Now turns towards hope, and now changes to doubt:
 No, mine, like the needle without variation,
 Only looks to one point, and that point's Consumma-
 tion.

I want to behold this young urchin arise,
 Before I have lost or my legs or my eyes,
 That I may enjoy all his little vagaries,
 As the changeable season of infancy varies.
 I long to be moulding his heart and his spirit;
 To shew him the fields he is born to inherit;
 Lead him round our rich woods, while my limbs are
 yet limber,
 And tell the young rogue how I've nurs'd up his
 timber;
 That when the worn thread of my life is untwisted,
 He long may remember that I have existed;
 And when my old frame in our monument rests,
 As he walks by my grave with a few worthy guests,
 He

He thus to some warm-hearted friend may address him,
Here lies my odd, honest, old Uncle—God bless him !

MRS. FELIX.

Thank Heaven, dear Cousin, your hale constitution
Shews not the least sign of a near dissolution.

SELINA.

To make your life happy, whate'er the condition,
Has been, my dear Uncle, my highest ambition ;
To fulfil every wish that your fancy can frame,
Still is, as it ought to be, ever my aim :
But if by your voice I am doom'd to the altar,
With terror and pain my weak accents must falter,
Unless my kind stars a new lover should send me,
Unlike all the swains who now deign to attend me.

SIR NICHOLAS.

Nice wench ! do you want the whole world to adore
you ?

Would you have all the men of the earth rang'd be-
fore you ?

For, thanks to your charms, and to fortune's kind
bounty,

You may rank in your train all the youth of our county ;
And, chuse whom you will, if the man has but worth,
And is nearly your equal in wealth and in birth,

I give my consent—you are free from restriction ;
 But I will not be plagu'd with perverse contradiction,
 I will see you wed without any delay :

Your two fittest lovers are coming to-day ;

Young Sapphic, whose verses delight all the fair,
 And Dicky Decisive, Sir Jacob's next heir :

Both young and both wealthy, both comely and clever,
 To gain you, no doubt, each will warmly endeavour ;
 For they come for a month, by my own invitation,
 On purpose to sound my dear girl's inclination :

I have said to them both, and no man can speak fairer,
 Let him, who can please her most, win her and wear her.

SELINA, *aside to Mrs. Felix.*

Good angels defend me !

MRS. FELIX.

I see nothing frightful :

Our month with such guests must be very delightful :
 When Sapphic's soft verses incline us to dose,
 Dick will keep us awake with satirical prose.

SIR NICHOLAS.

Don't cross me, I say ! nor mislead my good Niece !
 By Jove, if she thwarts me with any caprice,
 Like a certain old Justice, I'll ring up my maids,
 And marry the first of the frank-hearted jades ;

For

For perverse contradiction I never will bear,
But provide for myself a more dutiful heir.

MRS. FELIX.

Dear Cousin, in spite of his Worship's decision,
You cannot be certain of such a provision :
Attempts of that nature are subject to fail.

SIR NICHOLAS.

My designs, you shall see, Madam, always prevail :
For if this nice Gipsy, by your machination,
Declines every offer, to give me vexation,
Like my late jolly neighbour, Sir Timothy Trickum,
Who vindictively married the frail Molly Quickum,
I'll make sure of the matter, and chuse me a wife,
With an heir ready plac'd on the threshold of life :
For, as I have said, tho' a foe to restriction,
I never will suffer perverse contradiction.
You now know my mind, which no mask ever covers,
So farewell, and prepare to receive your two lovers.

[Exit.

MRS. FELIX.

Go thy way, thou strange mixture of sense and of
blindness !

A model at once of oppression and kindness.

Thy will, thou odd compound of goodness and whim,
Is a stream, against which it is treason to swim;
Yet we must cross the current—

SELINA.

Dear Cousin, say how!

Direct opposition he will not allow:
What can you devise as a plan of prevention?
How divert his keen spirit from this new intention?
I had much rather die than be ever united
To one of the lovers, that he has invited:
My heart has a thorough aversion to both:
Yet to make him unhappy I'm equally loth;
When I think what I owe to his tender protection,
The worst of all ills is to lose his affection.

MRS. FELIX.

Dear Girl, your warm gratitude gives you new charms:
'Tis an amiable fear which your bosom alarms,
And I from your Uncle's quick humour would screen you,
Not loosen the bands of affection between you.
He merits your love, and you know he has mine;
Yet we somehow must baffle his hasty design,
Nor suffer his whim thus to make you a wife,
To repent the rash business the rest of his life,
Take courage! kind chance may assist us—

SELINA.

SELINA.

I doubt it,

Yet Heaven knows how we shall manage without it ;
For when his heart's set on a favourite scheme,
His ardor and haste, as you know, are extreme ;
Like a med'cine ill-tim'd, opposition is vain,
And inflames the disorder 'twas meant to restrain.

MRS. FELIX.

In his fevers indeed there is no intermission ;
And thanks, gentle Coz ! to your soft disposition !
So sweet and compliant your temper has been,
You have taught him to think contradiction a sin ;
And here all around him confirm that belief,
His vassals all bow to the nod of their chief.
Here, shut from the world in this rural dominion,
No mortal opposes his will or opinion ;
And thus he is spoil'd—Politicians all say,
Human nature's not fashion'd for absolute sway.

SELINA.

'Tis true, tho' the world, as you say, think him odd,
In this sphere he is held a diminutive god :
And when I behold how his fortune is spent,
In suppressing vexation, and spreading content ;

When

When I hear all the poor his kind bounty expressing,
 And thoroughly know how he merits their blessing,
 My feelings with theirs in his eulogy join,
 And confess, that his nature is truly divine.

MRS. FELIX.

Thou excellent Girl! if such fondness and zeal
 For a warm-hearted, whimsical Uncle you feel,
 With what fine sensations your bosom will glow,
 What tender attachment your temper will shew,
 When your fortunate lord Love and Hymen invest
 With higher dominion o'er that gentle breast!
 But tell me, dear Cousin—be honest—declare,
 Has no young secret swain form'd an interest there?
 I suspect—but don't let my suspicion affright you,
 'Tho' the good Knight's rare virtues amuse and de-
 light you,
 From this gloomy old hall you would wish to get free,
 Had not Cupid preserv'd you from feeling *ennui*:
 Come tell me the name of the favourite youth;
 I am sure I guess right.

SELINA.

No, in sad sober truth,
 I never have seen, in the course of my life,
 A mortal to whom I should chuse to be wife.

MRS.

MRS. FELIX.

Ye stars, what a pity !—I wish I could learn
That my Colonel from India would shortly return,
Both for your sake and mine ; for our present distress
He would speedily turn into joyous success ;
As his regiment must some young hero afford,
Who might throw at your feet both himself and his
sword.

What say you, my dear, to a soldier ?—

Enter Jenny.

JENNY.

Oh ! Madam,

Here's young Mr. Sapphic—I vow, if I had them,
I'd give fifty pounds had you seen how politely
He begg'd me to tie a sweet nosegay up tightly,
Which is jolted to pieces.—Well, he's a sweet beau ;
And now with his pencil he's writing below,
I believe 'tis a posy, he writes it so neatly,
And I'm sure 'tis fine verse, Ma'am, it sounded so
sweetly.

MRS. FELIX.

Oh charming ! his vows will be very sublime,
And I trust we shall hear his proposals in rhyme.

SELINA.

How can you, dear Cousin, so cruelly jest in
 A business you know I am really distressed in ?
 I shall certainly forfeit my Uncle's protection,
 For I never can wed where I feel no affection.
 Do help me.

MRS. FELIX.

Good Girl, this perplexity smother,
 And think your two lovers will banish each other ;
 There's much to be hop'd from our present affairs,

JENNY.

O, Ma'am, Mr. Sapphic is coming up stairs.

(Aside as she goes out.)

I am mightily pleas'd with this marrying plan,
 And I hope in my spirit that he'll be the man.

[Exit,

Enter Sapphic.

SAPPHIC.

Fair Ladies, the moments have seem'd to be hours,
 While I stopt in your hall to adjust a few flowers :
 For the season, I'm told, they're uncommonly fine ;
 But I still wish the tribute more worthy the shrine.

[Bowing and presenting them to Selina.

SELINA.

S E L I N A.

Mr. Sapphic is always extremely polite :
 These roses, indeed, are a wonderful sight :
 You are far better florists than we are.

M R S. F E L I X.

My dear,

Mr. Sapphic has magic to make them appear,
 And Flora is brib'd, by the songs he composes,
 To produce for her poet extempore roses ;
 Into this early bloom all her plants are bewitch'd :
 But you do not observe how the gift is enrich'd,
 Here's a border of verse, if my eyes don't deceive me.

S E L I N A, *aside to Mrs. Felix.*

Dear Cousin, you'll read it—I pray you, relieve me ;
 I shall blush like a fool at each civil expression.

M R S. F E L I X, *aside to Selina, taking the paper.*
 Now, with emphasis just, and with proper discretion.

(Mrs. Felix reads.)

“ Ye happy flowers, give and receive perfume

“ As on Selina's fragrant breast ye bloom :

“ From earth, tho' not arrang'd in order nice,

“ Ye are transplanted into Paradise ;

“ If on that spot ye languish into death,

“ 'Twill be from envy of her sweeter breath.”

'Tis

'Tis a delicate compliment, tender and pretty,
What original spirit! how graceful and witty!

S A P P H I C.

Dear Ma'am, you're too good, to find any thing in it,
'Tis a mere hasty trifle—the work of a minute:
On the anvil I had not a moment to hammer,
And I fear, in my haste I have sinn'd against grammar:

M R S. F E L I X.

All slight imperfections I never regard
When I meet with such vigor of thought in a bard,
With a fancy so brilliant—

S A P P H I C.

O! Ma'am, you're too kind;
But candor's the test of an amiable mind.
I wish that your taste all our Critics might guide,
To soften that rigor with which they decide.

M R S. F E L I X.

From Critics, dear Sir, you have little to fear.
If Mr. Decisive himself had been here,
He must have been charm'd with this sweet *jeu d'esprit*,
Which, as he is coming to-day, he shall see.
I am eager to hear how his wit will applaud it:
To conceal it would be of due praise to defraud it.

S A P P H I C.

S A P P H I C.

In Mercy's name, Ladies, I beg your protection,
Preserve my poor rhymes from Decisive's inspection;
Consider how hasty—

M R S. F E L I X.

Say rather how sprightly—

S A P P H I C.

Compos'd in a moment—

M R S. F E L I X.

Produc'd so politely!

S A P P H I C.

He'll cut them to atoms!

M R S. F E L I X.

Dear Sir, he's your friend,
And I thought he had seen all the poems you penn'd:
I was told that to him your long works you rehearse—
Does Mr. Decisive himself write in verse?

S A P P H I C.

I wish from my soul that he did, now and then;
But he uses the pen-knife much more than the pen,
And too freely has slash'd all who write in the nation,
To give them an opening for retaliation.
My old friend Decisive has honour and wit;
To the latter, indeed, he makes most things submit;

And

And thinks it fair sport, as a friend or a foe,
 To knock down a Bard by a flaming *bon mot*.
 To your sex indeed his chief failings I trace ;
 For the fair-ones so flatter'd his figure and face,
 That too early he ceas'd the chaste Muses to follow,
 And being Adonis, would not be Apollo.

MRS. FELIX.

Yet he has much fancy.

SAPPHIC.

O, Madam, no doubt,

And genius, that study would soon have brought out.
 Had his thoughts been less turn'd to his legs and his
 looks,

Ere this he'd have written some excellent books :
 'Tis pity such parts should thro' indolence fall ;
 But he never composes, and reads not at all.

SELINA.

Not read, Mr. Sapphic ! you surely mistake ;
 Your friend cannot be an illiterate rake :
 Our neighbours, who lately from London came down,
 Declare, that his word forms the taste of the town.

SAPPHIC.

Dear Madam, the business is easily done ;
 He judges all authors, but never reads one.

MRS.

MRS. FELIX.

I'm sure he must own this *impromptu* is sweet,
And I vow he shall read it—

SAPPHIC.

Dear Ma'am, I intreat,
I conjure you to spare me; this earnest petition
I know you will grant me—

MRS. FELIX.

On this one condition,
That for six lines suppress'd you indulge me with twenty :
Come, shew us your pocket-book—there you have
plenty
Of tender poetical squibs for the Fair.

SAPPHIC, *taking out his pocket-book.*

Dear Ma'am, here is nothing.

MRS. FELIX.

A volume, I swear,
O, charming!—well, now you're an excellent man;
'Tis stuff'd like a pincushion—

SAPPHIC.

Yes, Ma'am—with bran.

MRS. FELIX.

Fie, fie, you're too modest, and murder my meaning;
What a harvest is here! yet I ask but a gleanings:

It would not be fair to seize all the collection,
 Tho' all is most certainly worthy inspection.
 Indulge us, dear Sir : come, I'll take no refusal.

S A P P H I C.

Indeed, Ma'am, here's nothing that's fit for perusal!

M R S. F E L I X.

There are fifty fine things, and one can't chuse amiss.

S A P P H I C, *taking out a paper.*

Here's one new little song—

M R S. F E L I X.

Well then, let me have this.

S A P P H I C, *after giving a paper.*

They all are so jumbled, I fear I am wrong;
 I meant to have shewn you a new little song,
 Which was written last week on the ball at our
 races,
 Where I heard the Miss Trotters compar'd to the
 Graces;

I could not help saying, 'twas very profane,
 It was taking the name of the Graces in vain.

M R S. F E L I X *reads.*

“On seeing Selina and Jenny near each other in
 “the garden.”

S A P P H I C.

S A P P H I C.

O mercy, dear Madam, you must not read those !
A stanza unfinish'd.—

MRS. FELIX.

How sweetly it flows !

Selina, pray hear it.

SELINA, *aside to MRS. FELIX.*

Dear Cousin, enough !

How can you delight in his horrible stuff !

MRS. FELIX *reads.*

“ Tho’ each in the same garden blows,

“ The poet must be crazy,

“ Who, when invited by the rose,

“ Can stoop to pick the daisy.”

SELINA, *aside to MRS. FELIX.*

If you love me, dear Cousin, assist me, I pray,

To end all this nonsense, and get him away.—

Pray, Sir, when you came, was my Uncle below ?

S A P P H I C.

He’s abroad, Ma’am, your servant inform’d me—

S E L I N A.

O No !

You have heard he is building a temple to Pan,

And we hope that your taste may embellish the plan :

At the end of the walk, in his favourite grove,
 Where there formerly stood an old ruin'd alcove,
 You'll find him ; and as 'tis an art you are skill'd in,
 'Twill please him to know what you think of the building.

MRS. FELIX.

Aye do, Mr. Sapphic, inspect what is done,
 For the workmen all blunder'd when first they begun :
 Your opinion, I'm sure, will oblige the good Knight.

SELINA.

An inscription, he once said, he wish'd you to write.

SAPPHIC.

Dear Madam !—the hint is delightful, I vow ;
 To the God of Arcadia I hasten to bow :
 I shall find the good Knight in the midst of the dome ;
 I am heartily glad that he is not from home.
 We shall surely contrive something clever between us,
 And the Muse will compose by the order of Venus.

[Bows tenderly to Selina, and Exit.]

SELINA.

How could you so praise that impertinent creature ?
 And praise him without discomposing a feature !—
 I could not have thought, before this conversation,
 That your frankness could turn into such adulation.

MRS.

MRS. FELIX.

The world, my dear Child, is to you quite unknown ;
 When you see it, you'll find such discourse is the *ton* ;
 Fine folks in high life learn to praise with great glee
 Such persons and things as they sicken to see.

To me your best thanks for my speeches are due—
 By thus flattering the Poet, I surely serve you ;
 He will now play the Sky-lark instead of the Dove,
 And stun me with songs, while you're sav'd from his
 love.

Enter Jenny.

JENNY.

Dear Ma'am, now I hope Mr. Sapphic's quite blest,
 For he flies thro' the walks like a bird to his nest,—
 He's a sweet pretty gentleman.

MRS. FELIX, *aside to Selina.*

This, if I shew it,
 Will soon banish Jenny's regard for the poet :—
 Jenny, see what your friend Mr. Sapphic has written.

JENNY.

Dear Ma'am, with his verses I always am smitten.

(Having read the stanza.)

A Daify indeed ! to be sure I am neat,
 But tho' I'm a servant, I hope I am sweet.

When he makes my young Mistress a Rose or a Lily,
 He might turn me at least to a Daffy-down-dilly.
 But a Daisy, forsooth ! with no fragrance at all !—
 I'll cross him for this—

S E L I N A.

What's that noise in the hall ?

J E N N Y.

As sure as I live 'tis your other gay Spark,
 For I saw a new chaise driving into the park.—
 I'll see, Ma'am.

(Aside going out.)

I'll shew this fine Poet a trick—

A Daisy ! that no one but children will pick. [*Exit.*]

M R S. F E L I X.

This simile Jenny I see cannot swallow,
 And her anger may ruin this son of Apollo ;
 For in courtship this maxim is often display'd,
 He has half lost the Mistress who loses the Maid.

Enter Decisive.

D E C I S I V E.

Alone, my dear Ladies !—they told me below,
 Our friend Sapphic was here, your poetical Beau ;
 I was almost afraid that my sudden intrusion
 Might check the rich stream of some lyric effusion.

(To Selina.)

I am happy to see you so lovely to-day ;
But I hope I've not frighted your Poet away.

S E L I N A.

O no—Mr. Sapphic had bid us adieu—

M R S. F E L I X.

And not without saying some fine things of you :
He declares, that with those brilliant parts you possess,
'Tis a sin you ne'er send any work to the press.

D E C I S I V E.

Good Sapphic !—In truth 'tis his comfort to think
The whole duty of man lies in spilling of ink ;
And at Paradise gate his large volumes of metre
Will, I hope, be allow'd a fair pass by Saint Peter.

M R S. F E L I X.

Then the Saint must be free from your critical spirit,
For I know you have little esteem for their merit ;
You're a rigorous judge, and to poets terrific.

D E C I S I V E.

I wish my friend's Muse was not quite so prolific :
But in rhymes, when a child, I have heard he would
squeak,
And so proved a poet before he could speak ;

On his death-bed, I doubt not, he'll still think of verse,
And groan out a rhyme to his doctor or nurse.

MRS. FELIX.

I fancy your favourite reading is prose ;
Here's a new set of travels, pray have you read those ?

DECISIVE, *taking the book.*

This author is lucky to meet with a buyer :
A traveller's but a soft word for a liar.
Such works may please those who have ne'er been
abroad,

But men, who have travell'd, perceive all the fraud.

MRS. FELIX.

Is the work so deceitful ! it seems you have read it ?

DECISIVE.

Not a syllable, Madam—

MRS. FELIX.

Pray who then has said it ?

DECISIVE.

Not a soul that I know—but such books are a trade,
And I perfectly know how those volumes are made.

MRS. FELIX.

'Tis a work, I am told, that has great reputation
Both for wit and for truth—

DECISIVE.

DECISIVE.

We're a credulous nation—

MRS. FELIX.

Pray what kind of books are your favourite study?

DECISIVE.

I find modern works only make the brain muddy,
As my friends grew by reading more awkward than wise,
And ruin'd their persons and clouded their eyes;
I have wisely resolv'd not to read any more,
Since each living author is turn'd to a *bore*.

MRS. FELIX.

How can you so waste all your bright mental powers?
'Tis pity you men have not such works as ours—
What d'ye say to my knotting?

(Takes out her work.)

DECISIVE.

Your box wants a hinge.

And I'll give you a much better pattern for fringe;
I brought it from France.

MRS. FELIX.

Now I see, my good friend,
There is no kind of work which your skill cannot
mend:

In

In all arts you possess a distinguishing head,
From building a temple to knotting a thread.

DECISIVE.

A-propos of a temple—pray has the good Knight
Rais'd his altar to Pan?—he had fix'd on the site.
Is the structure begun?—I have not seen his plan—

MRS. FELIX.

Then hasten, and pay your devotions to Pan.
Sir Nicholas now in his vestibule stands,
To guide all his workmen, and quicken their hands ;
And Sapphic is gone to attend the good Knight,
And try what inscription his genius can write.

DECISIVE.

Poor Pan ! by the Graces thou'rt left in the lurch ;
Thy temple will look like a trim parish church,
With Sapphic's inscriptions, like scraps of the Bible,
Put up, as the Church-wardens say, in a *libel*.

MRS. FELIX.

Indeed we much fear so—pray haste to inspect it,
And exert all your exquisite taste to correct it.

DECISIVE.

Ma'am, I'll do what I can, for it puts me in wrath
To see a fine temple disgrac'd by a Goth. [Exit.

MRS.

MRS. FELIX.

Well, my dear, your two Lovers, like true men of
fashion,

Do not pester you much with the heat of their passion
You'll be quite at your ease—thanks to Pan and the
Muse!

Enter Jenny, hastily.

JENNY.

News! news! my dear Ladies, most excellent news!

SELINA.

The girl is quite wild!

MRS. FELIX.

What transports you so, Jenny?

JENNY.

I've news for you, Madam, that's well worth a guinea:
I have news from the Colonel—

MRS. FELIX.

A letter! Where is it?

JENNY.

No, Ma'am, here's a stranger arriv'd on a visit,
And he comes from the place where the Colonel is
fighting.

MRS. FELIX.

And with letters for me?

JENNY.

J E N N Y.

Madam, that I'm not right in ;
For I run from his man when I got half my story ;
But the Colonel, he says, is all riches and glory.

M R S. F E L I X.

Dear girl ! that's enough ; through my life I shall feel
Due regard for thy warm and affectionate zeal.
But where is this Stranger ?

J E N N Y.

Just walk'd to my Master.
His poor man has met with a cruel disaster ;
He was wounded in battle.

S E L I N A.

Pray treat him with care.—
In your joy, my dear Cousin, I heartily share.

M R S. F E L I X.

This Stranger's a jewel for you from the East ;
He's a Captain, I hope, my dear Jenny, at least.

J E N N Y.

Ah, Madam ! my fancy suppos'd him so too ;
But we're both in the wrong, and for Miss he won't do,
For I learnt from his man he is only a Doctor.

M R S. F E L I X.

Poor Jane ! how the difference of title has shock'd her !

For my part I can't find, by my reason or feeling,
That the art of destroying excels that of healing :
We may equally love the professors of both.

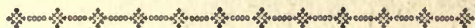
J E N N Y.

That Miss tho' should marry a Doctor, I'm loth.

M R S. F E L I X.

Come, my dear, let us meet 'em—I can't rest above—
How slowly fly letters from hands that we love !

End of A C T I.



A C T II.

S C E N E I.

Enter Jenny and Jonathan.

J E N N Y.

C O M E, dear Mr. Jonathan, tell me the whole :
An account of a battle I love to my soul ;
There is nothing on earth I so truly delight in,
As to hear a brave Soldier discourse about fighting.—
So the Colonel was wounded, you say, near the wall :
Whereabouts was the shot ? Did he instantly fall ?

J O N A T H A N.

JONATHAN.

No ; recoiling a little, he rush'd on again,
 And fought like a lion, made fiercer by pain ;
 Tho' a curst keen arrow, an Indian let fly,
 Pierc'd the bone of his cheek just below the right eye.
 'Twas a horrible wound ! but it could not appall him.

JENNY.

O mercy ! that such a hard fate should befall him.
 Alas ! I'm afraid that his fine manly face
 Must have lost by the scar all its spirit and grace.
 Does he look very hideous ?

JONATHAN.

No ; thanks to my Master,
 You can hardly perceive that he e'er wore a plaister.
 There never was known a more wonderful cure ;
 But kind Heaven assists my good Master, I'm sure ;
 Without it, the skill of no mortal could save
 The many brave lads he has kept from the grave.
 You would weep with delight to behold him surrounded
 With a hundred fine fellows, once horribly wounded ;
 Who with thanks for their lives are still eager to
 greet him,
 And hail him with blessings whenever they meet him.

J E N N Y.

God reward him, say I, for the good he has done ;
And of those he has sav'd I'm glad you are one.

J O N A T H A N.

Aye, twice he preserv'd me when all thought me dead,
And once brought me off at the risque of his head.
It was not his business to mix in the strife,
And some thought him mad when he ventur'd his life
To bring off a poor mangled private like me ;
But I've still a heart left, in this trunk that you see,
Which loves the brave spirit who snatch'd me from
death,

And will serve him, I hope, till my very last breath.

J E N N Y.

Your scenes of hard service, I hope, are all over ;
It is now fairly time you should both live in clover.
Your Master, I trust, has brought home as much
treasure

As will make him a parliament-man at his pleasure ;
And, to recompense you for the wound in your arm,
Perhaps he will buy you a snug little farm.

J O N A T H A N.

When a Gentleman comes from the East, my good girl,
You all think he is loaded with diamonds and pearl ;

You

You fancy his treasure too great to be told,
 And suppose he possesses a mountain of gold.
 A few daring blades, by a bold kind of stealth,
 Have indeed from the Indies brought home so much
 wealth,

That with all their keen senses they ne'er could em-
 ploy it,

And have dy'd from the want of a heart to enjoy it :
 But some hundred brave lads, whom gay youth led to
 enter

That promising region of hope and adventure,
 Have toil'd many years in those rich burning climes,
 With small share of their wealth, and with none of
 their crimes.

Now my Master and I both belong to this tribe ;
 Not a single Nabob have we kill'd for a bribe ;
 And to tell you a truth, which I hope you'll not
 doubt,

We're as poor and as honest as when we set out.

J E N N Y.

What ! your Master still poor in so thriving a trade !
 And, with patients so rich, has he never been paid
 For the wounds he has heal'd ?

J O N A T H A N.

JONATHAN.

Yes, my dear, for his fees
I know he has touch'd many thousand rupees ;
But the sight of distress he could never endure ;
What he took from the rich he bestow'd on the poor.

JENNY.

Well, Heaven will pay him, no doubt, in due season.
But what brings him home?—I would fain know the
reason

Why he leaves that rich land in the bloom of his life :
I suppose, from the want of a cherry-cheek'd wife ?
They say those black wenches are sad nasty creatures,
And tho' they've fine shapes they have horrible features.
Does he want a white sweetheart ? or has he a Black ?

JONATHAN.

'Tis indeed a white woman that brings us both back :
But, alas ! 'tis an old one—my Master, it seems,
Has a fond simple mother that's troubled with dreams,
And he, like a tender and soft-hearted youth,
Resigns his fine prospect, and comes home, forsooth,
Because the old dame has express'd her desires
To see him in England before she expires :
And egad, since he's come she will live long enough,
For she seems to be made of good durable stuff.

J E N N Y.

Well, now I shall love him a hundred times more
 Than I did for the stories you told me before.
 God bless the kind soul ! who behaves to his mother
 As if he well knew he could ne'er have another ;
 And were he my son, I could not live without him ;
 I could stay here all day while you're talking about
 him.—

But 'tis time to be gone ; we must both disappear,
 For the Colonel's sweet Wife and your Master are here.

J O N A T H A N.

Stop, I must peep at her ;—she's as bright as the day ! }

J E N N Y.

And her heart is as good as her spirit is gay—
 Come, I'll shew you our walks—we may get out
 this way. [*Exeunt.*] }

Enter Mrs. Felix and Morley.

M R S. F E L I X.

Dear excellent Friend, since I owe to your worth
 The safety of what I most value on earth,
 With those it loves best my heart yields you a place,
 And I clasp your kind hand with a sister's embrace.
 To judge of the man whom such service endears,
 I want not the tardy acquaintance of years ;

But

But in strong tho' quick ties, that no chances can sever,
In an instant he seizes my friendship for ever :
And had I much less obligation to you,
My regard and esteem I should still think your due,
From the picture my Felix has drawn of your mind.

M O R L E Y.

His warm soul to his friends is most partially kind :
But such as I am I most truly am yours ;
Your goodness my grateful attachment ensures,
And my heart with proud transport your friendship
embraces.

Tho' I ne'er gaz'd before on your personal graces,
I've beguil'd some long weeks of hard wearisome duty
With frequent discourse on your virtues and beauty ;
And I own for the Colonel it rais'd my esteem,
To mark with what pleasure he dwelt on the theme.

M R S. F E L I X.

You're an excellent creature to sooth a fond Wife,
Who regards her Lord's love hardly less than his life ;
But since you've replied with good-humour so steady
To the ten thousand questions I've ask'd you already,
I'll spare you to-day, and, if 'tis in my power,
Mention Felix's name only once in an hour.

That my thoughts to the Indies no longer may roam,
 Let me talk to you now about matters at home ;
 Your counsel may make our perplexity less,
 And finish our odd tragi-comic distress.
 First tell me, and speak without any disguise,
 (Tho' I fancy I read all your thoughts in your eyes)
 What d'ye think of my Cousin ?

MORLEY.

Her graces indeed

The glowing description of Felix exceed ;
 Tho' in praising her, oft he with pleasure has smil'd,
 Like a father describing his favourite child.
 For my part, I think she is lavishly blest
 With those beauties by which the pure mind is express'd,
 That her heart is with truth and with tenderness warm,
 That sweet sensibility shines in her form ;
 A form, on which no man his eye ever turn'd
 Without feeling his breast in her welfare concern'd.
 'Tis the lot of such graces, wherever they dwell,
 None can see their soft mistress and not wish her well.

MRS. FELIX.

Very gallantly said, and the praise is her due—
 But how came her Lovers so well known to you ?

MORLEY

MORLEY.

Her Lovers!—dear Madam, I hope you're in jest—
 Or if by their vows your sweet Friend is address'd,
 Heaven grant, for the peace of her delicate mind,
 That her hand may be never to either resign'd!

MRS. FELIX.

From my soul, I assure you, I join in your prayer;
 But whence does it spring?

MORLEY.

I will freely declare,
 Tho' they're both men of fortune, fair birth, and good
 name,
 With figures that set some young nymphs in a flame;
 Tho' at each, many ladies are ready to catch
 At what the world calls, a most excellent match;
 Yet, if I have read your fair Cousin aright,
 A bosom so tender, a spirit so bright,
 Must be wretched with such a companion for life,
 As each of these Lovers would prove to his Wife.

MRS. FELIX.

You are right; but their characters where could you
 know?

MORLEY.

I knew them at college a few years ago,

Before, by a whimsical odd sort of fate,
 And some family losses, too long to relate,
 In Europe my views of prosperity ceas'd,
 And chance sent me forth to my friends in the East.

MRS. FELIX,

Pray what sort of youths were these two modish men?

MORLEY.

You now find them both what they seem'd to me then ;
 Two characters form'd like most young men of fashion,
 Whose cold selfish pride is their sovereign passion :
 In each, tho' they're men of an opposite turn,
 The same heart-freezing vanity still you discern.
 To indulge that dear vanity, each still displays
 All the force of his mind, tho' in different ways.
 Thence, in spinning weak verse Sapphic's toil never
 ends,

And Decisive ne'er stops in deriding his friends ;
 Each equally fancies no nymph can resist
 His lips, which he thinks all the Graces have kiss'd.

MRS. FELIX.

Perfect knowledge of both your just picture has
 shown !—

The warmth of these Lovers diverts me, I own.

Of conquest each seems to himself very clear,
And feels from his rivals no diffident fear.
'Tis easy to see, from their satisfied air,
Each loves his own person much more than the Fair.
But, my poor gentle Coz wishes both at a distance ;
And I want to contrive, by your friendly assistance,
To relieve her, and quietly send them from hence
Without the Knight's knowledge.

M O R L E Y.

As neither wants sense,
Can't the Lady pronounce their dismissal at once,
Which none can mistake but an impudent dunce ?

M R S. F E L I X.

This measure seems easy indeed at first view ;
But, alas ! 'tis a measure we dare not pursue.
Our warm-hearted, whimsical, positive Knight,
Allows not to woman this natural right ;
And hence my young Friend, in a pitiful case,
Knows not how to reject what she ne'er can embrace ;
For nothing her Uncle's resentment would smother,
Should she banish one suitor, and not take the other.

M O R L E Y.

Then indeed I am griev'd for the Lady's distress ;
But how can I aid her ?

MRS. FELIX.

'Tis hard, I confess,
 To a sudden retreat this bold Pair to oblige,
 And make two such Heroes abandon a siege ;
 Yet I wish we could do it—and when they recede,
 The departure of both must appear their own deed.

MORLEY, *after a pause*.

Well—my friendship for you has suggested a scheme.

MRS. FELIX.

'Tis a service our hearts will for ever esteem.
 But what is your project ?

MORLEY.

Don't question me what,
 Left you think me a fool for too simple a plot :
 'Tis simple, and yet I would venture my life
 It will drive from these Beaus all their thoughts of a Wife ;
 And if my scheme prospers, with joy I'll confess
 What a whimsical trifle produc'd our success.

MRS. FELIX.

Well, keep your own secret, if silence is best ;
 'Tho' a woman, for once I'll in ignorance rest.—
 Here comes our friend Sapphic—he seems in a flurry.

MORLEY.

His step shews indeed a poetical hurry,

And

And we shall be call'd in as Gossips, fair neighbour,
For by the Bard's bustle his Muse is in labour.

Enter Sapphic.

S A P P H I C.

Dear Ma'am ! may I ask you for paper and ink,
Lest a fresh *jeu d'esprit* in oblivion should sink ?
For when my free fancy has brought forth my verse,
My treacherous memory proves a bad nurse.

M R S. F E L I X.

O pray ! for your Muse let us rear her young chit,
For the bantling, no doubt, must have spirit and wit ;
As a cradle to hold it, I beg you'll take that,

(giving him a paper.)

And your Friend here will aid you in dressing the Brat ;
At a rite so important I merit no place,
And I beg to withdraw while you're washing its face.

[Exit.

S A P P H I C.

That's a charming gay creature—luxuriant and young—
But I've lost half a stanza—the deuce take her tongue ;—
Let me see—let me see if I can't recollect it. —
'Tis done ;—and now, Morley, pray hear or inspect it.

M O R L E Y.

The Poet himself his own verse should recite.

S A P P H I C.

S A P P H I C.

You're a sensible fellow—your maxim is right.

(*Reads.*)

“Thy old Arcadia, Pan, resign,

“For this more rich retreat :

“A fairer nymph here decks thy shrine ;

“Be this thy fav'rite seat.”

Well, my Friend, won't this bring the old God out of
Greece ?

M O R L E Y.

Aye, and make good Sir Nicholas give you his Niece.

S A P P H I C.

Yes, I fancy this stanza will make the Girl mine.

M O R L E Y.

What Poet can wish for a prize more divine ?

I give you much joy on your conquest, my Friend ;

Yet the eyes of regret on your nuptials I bend,

And grieve in reflecting, that conjugal joy

Your poetical harvest of Fame must destroy.

S A P P H I C.

What the deuce do you mean ?

M O R L E Y.

To those great works adieu

Which the world now expects with impatience from you.

The

The Poet when blest can no more be sublime,
And a chill matrimonial must strike thro' his rhyme,

S A P P H I C.

You're mistaken, dear Doctor—connubial delight
Will give a new zest to each poem I write ;
And you'll see such productions !—

M O R L E Y.

'Tis true, now and then
Polemics by marriage have quicken'd their pen.
A Dutch Critic, I know, by the aid of his Wife,
Made a book and a child every year of his life.
But total seclusion from Venus and Bacchus,
Is, you know, to the Bard recommended by Flaccus.
A grand epic poem I hear you are writing ;
'Tis a work that your country will take great de-
light in :

But consider, my Friend, when you're deep in heroics,
As Poets have not all the patience of Stoics,
How you'll grieve to be check'd in the flow of your
verse,

By a young squalling child and an old scolding nurse ;
E'en the qualms of your Lady may drive from your
brain

Fine thoughts that you ne'er can recover again ;

Reflect

Reflect how you'll feel, with such hopes of succeeding,
If your Muse should miscarry because your Wife's
breeding.

S A P P H I C.

Egad, in that case I should think my fate hard.

M O R L E Y.

I myself have beheld an unfortunate Bard,
Who his nails for a rhyme unsuccessfully bit,
When family cares had extinguish'd his wit.—
With many who sing in the Muse's full choir,
It would do them no mischief to muffle their lyre ;
But for you, whom the Nine, with a tender presage,
Are prepar'd to proclaim the first Bard of our age ;
For you, who of Taste are the favourite theme—

S A P P H I C.

Yes, I think I stand high in the public esteem.

M O R L E Y.

For you, I should grieve if domestic delight
On your fair rising laurels should fall as a blight.
'Tis the pride of great minds, whom the Muses inflame,
To sacrifice joy on the altar of Fame :
Your passion's renown—of this Girl are you fonder?—
On this delicate point I must leave you to ponder ;
Consider it, while I attend the old Knight. [Exit.

SAPPHIC *alone (after a pause.)*

By Jove, I believe my friend Morley is right.
 Thou, Fame, art my Mistress ; to win thee I sing.
 This Girl, tho' she's handsome, is but a dull thing.
 'Tis clear, whensoever I a poem rehearse,
 That she has no relish for elegant verse.—
 Her fortune indeed would be rather convenient,
 But the glorious, to me, is before the expedient.
 Egad, I'd quit Venus herself, if I knew
 That the system of Morley was certainly true.
 I don't think the Girl to Decisive inclin'd ;
 But here comes her Maid, who may tell me her mind.

Enter Jenny.

My good little Jenny, you're trusty and true,
 And your Mistress, I know, tells her secrets to you.
 What you know, to a friend you may safely impart,
 And give me a perfect account of her heart :
 Pray how do I stand in your Lady's regard ?

J E N N Y.

Now's my time to be even with this saucy Bard.
(aside.)

To be sure, Sir, the taste of my Lady is odd ;
 But poetry moves her no more than a clod.

SAPPHIC.

S A P P H I C.

What! no relish for rhyme!—Does she never repeat
The soft little sonnets I've laid at her feet?

J E N N Y.

Ah, Sir! would my Mistress were once of my mind,
(For I read all the verses of yours that I find);
But my Lady's so cruel she thwarts my desire,
And to hide them from me throws them into the fire.

S A P P H I C.

She's a fool—she's a fool (*aside.*)---I should have a
fine life,

With such a prosaic dull jade of a wife.

J E N N Y.

But, my good Sir, I hope you will not be dejected,
I could tell you by whom all your wit is respected.
There's a heart upon which you have made such im-
pression—

But I must not betray her by my indiscretion.

S A P P H I C.

Whom d'ye mean, my good Jenny? come, tell me,
my dear.

J E N N Y.

You would make a bad use of the secret, I fear.—

Now

Now I hope I shall lead the Bard into a scrape, (*aside.*)
For he bites like a Gudgeon, and cannot escape.

S A P P H I C.

Come, say who's in love with me—if she is fair,
I'll not leave the dear creature, I vow, to despair.

J E N N Y.

O lud ! I protest she is coming this way ;
But I did not intend her regard to betray.
I must fly—but I beg that you'll not be too free.

[*Exit.*

S A P P H I C.

Madam Felix !—I thought she was partial to me.

Enter Mrs. Felix.

M R S. F E L I X.

May I enter without incommoding the Muse ?

S A P P H I C.

By a question like this your own charms you abuse.
Those eyes, my dear Madam, were form'd, I profess,
To inspirit a Poet, and not to depress ;
From your presence he surely must catch inspiration.

M R S. F E L I X.

A very poetical fine salutation !
But I seriously beg, if you're busy with rhyme,
That you will not allow me to take up your time.

As

As I'm not Selina, you're free from restriction,
And may tell me plain truths, unembellish'd with fiction.

S A P P H I C.

Then I swear, my dear creature, I swear by this hand,
That I feel as I touch it my genius expand ;
That your lips—O by Jove ! he's a madman or booby,
Who roves to the Indies for diamond or ruby ;
And each vein in my heart his strange folly condemns,
Who leaves these more bright and more exquisite gems.
Sweet Fair ! let me keep, while their richness I praise,
The cold damp of neglect from o'erclouding their rays.

*(While Mr. Sapphic kisses Mrs. Felix with great
vehemence, Jenny enters unperceived.)*

J E N N Y.

O ho !—have I caught you ? impertinent Poet !
This is more than I hop'd for—my Master shall know
it. [Exit.

M R S. F E L I X.

Good God ! Mr. Sapphic, what frantic illusion
Has produc'd this ridiculous scene of confusion ?
All Poets are Quixotes in love, I am told ;
And the truth of the adage in you I behold.
As the Knight once mistook an old mill for a giant,
Your sense as disorder'd, your fancy as pliant,

Takes

Takes me for my Cousin—your love's ebullition
I only can pardon on this supposition.
I fain would suppose that no insult was meant,
Nor believe you could think, what I ought to resent.

SAPPHIC.

O ! talk not of anger, with lips that inspire
The strongest sensation of rapturous fire,
That with love's sweet convulsions shake every nerve :
O ! think not that I your resentment deserve ;
Because my warm heart, thus engross'd by your
 charms,
Is ambitious of filling these dear empty arms.
No, let me, while basking beneath your bright eye,
The place of a thankless deserter supply ;
And in this melting breast kindle ecstasy's flame,
Which Nature design'd for so glowing a frame.

MRS. FELIX.

Away, Sir !—and since in your fondling insanity
You reject the excuse which I form'd for your vanity,
My threats must inform you—

SAPPHIC.

O ! frown not, sweet creature ;
Let not wrath spoil the charm of thy every feature.

MRS. FELIX.

Regain you your sense—from my wrath you are free,
 Which should not be rais'd by a being like thee;
 Begone then!—my pardon in vain you'll implore,
 If you dare on this subject to breathe a word more.

SAPPHIC.

Words, indeed, my warm fair one, by Nature's confession,
 For the love that I feel are no proper expression;
 The soul's fond intent in soft murmurs should swell,
 And kisses explain what no language can tell.
 Ye Gods, how luxuriant!

MRS. FELIX.

Away! quit my arm!
 Or my cries in an instant the house shall alarm.

SAPPHIC.

Provoking sweet creature!—indulge my fond passion;
 Come, come, don't I know you're a woman of fashion?
 Your coyness, I've heard, you can sometimes give
 over;

And I'm sure you're too wise to be true to a rover.
 Besides, I have learnt, that with partial regard
 You have cast a kind eye on your ill-treated Bard.

MRS.

MRS. FELIX.

Away! thou vain coxcomb! nor, base as thou art,
 Insult the bright Lord of so loyal a heart;
 Begone!—I abhor thee—my person release!—

SIR NICHOLAS, *entering*.

Is it thus, my young Sir, you pay court to my Niece?

SAPPHIC.

Confusion! What devil has sent the old Knight?

SIR NICHOLAS.

How dare you, pert stripling, almost in my sight
 To insult a chaste female that's under my roof?—
 But since of your baseness you give me such proof,
 You shall feel it repaid by a proper correction.

SAPPHIC (*aside*.)

Deuce take this perverse and unlucky detection:
 I wish I had wisely, as Morley had taught me,
 Renounc'd that jade Venus before he thus caught me.
 What excuse can I make him?—(To Sir Nicholas)
 My dear worthy Sir,

Tho' I now seem most justly your wrath to incur,
 Yet as you grow cool, your opinion will vary,
 You will not resent such an idle vagary,
 A mere romping frolic—

SIR NICHOLAS.

A frolic, d'ye say !

Then a frolic of mine shall your frolic repay.—
 Call our servants to punish this frolicsome spark,
 They shall drag him across the new pond in the park.

SAPPHIC (*aside.*)

'Tis what he can't mean—yet his countenance such is,
 I wish from my soul I was out of his clutches.—

(*To Sir Nicholas.*)

Dear Sir, I assure you, I'm griev'd beyond measure
 That I thus have awaken'd your furious displeasure ;
 When calmer—

SIR NICHOLAS.

Young man, I am not in a fury,
 A sentence more just never came from a jury ;
 Such frolics as yours have Old England disgrac'd :
 In high life let them flourish as fashion and taste.
 To those wanton young fellows I am not severe,
 Who attack the loose Wife of a vain gambling Peer.
 My Lady, whose Lord wastes at Hazard the night,
 May plead to more generous pleasures some right ;
 I care not how each keeps their conjugal oath,
 Since honour and peace must be strangers to both.

But

But when a brave Soldier, pure Glory's true son,
Ennobled with laurels laboriously won ;
When risking in far distant climates his life,
To his Country he leaves a fair innocent Wife;
Accurst be the man, who, to friendship unjust,
Fails to guard as his soul this most delicate trust ;
Or to punish those fops who insult her chaste beauty,
And invite her to swerve from her honour and duty.
Of the doom that I think to such libertines due,
I will give to the world an example in you.
Our old English discipline, Ducking, by name,
Shall atone for your outrage, by quenching your flame,
Here ! William and John—

MRS. FELIX.

For my sake, I intreat
That you will not, dear Sir, this rough vengeance
complete.

SIR NICHOLAS.

By Jupiter, Cousin, to make him less fond,
He shall croak out his love to the frogs of our
pond.—

Here, William ! tell Jack after Stephen to skip,
And tell the old Huntsman to come with his whip,

Then wait all together around the hall door.

S A P P H I C.

O mercy, dear Sir ! I your mercy implore.

You will not destroy me ?

S I R N I C H O L A S.

No, only correct,

And teach you a brave Soldier's Wife to respect.

M R S. F E L I X.

Yet think, my dear Cousin, yet think, for my sake,

What a noise this ridiculous matter will make.

You know that my Felix's nature is such,

He don't wish his Wife to be talk'd of too much ;

His honour and quiet let us make our care,

And bury in silence this foolish affair :

Perhaps, in my manners too easy and gay,

My levity led the young Poet astray.

S I R N I C H O L A S.

No, no ! my good creature, you must not arraign

Your innocent self in a business so plain :

Besides, his offence by this plea cannot sink,

For they are the worst of all puppies that think

Each woman's a wanton who is not precise,

And that cheerfulness must be the herald of vice.

M R S.

MRS. FELIX.

Howe'er this may be—as he's now all repentance,
I earnestly beg a repeal of your sentence.

SAPPHIC.

Dear Ma'am I adore you for this intercession;
And I trust the good Knight will forgive my transgression.

SIR NICHOLAS.

Well, Sir, as beyond your desert you're befriended
By that virtue which you have so grossly offended,
You are free to depart; but remember, young swain,
That you ne'er touch the Wife of a Soldier again.

SAPPHIC.

If I do, may I die by the wind of a ball!
Heaven bless you, good folks, and this sociable hall!
Since my amorous folly your friendship thus loses,
My amours shall henceforth be confin'd to the Muses.

[Exit.

MRS. FELIX.

I thank you, dear Sir, and rejoice in my heart
That in safety you've suffer'd this youth to depart.

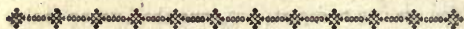
SIR NICHOLAS.

By Jupiter, Coz, I had cool'd your warm Poet,
Had I not been afraid all our neighbours might know it,

And make you the subject of such conversation
As I think your nice Colonel would hear with vexa-
tion.

Then, since for your sake I have let the Bard go,
Come and aid me to settle all matters below :
That my anxious cares in her comfort may cease,
I'm resolv'd young Decisive shall marry my Niece.

End of ACT II.



A C T III.

S C E N E I.

Enter Mrs. Felix and Selina.

MRS. FELIX.

WELL, my dear, what d'ye think of our me-
dical friend,

Whom the letters of Felix so highly commend ?

If my gratitude does not my judgment mislead,

He's the man in the world who with you might suc-
ceed :

Tho'

Tho' gentle, yet manly, tho' bashful, polite.
Are you not half in love?—

SELINA.

Yes, indeed, at first sight!—

His service to you on my heart is engrav'd,
And I love him, I own, for the life he has sav'd.
To win me perhaps he might not find it hard,
So esteem'd as he is by the friends I regard;
But I fancy such thoughts will not enter his brain;
And for my part, instead of attracting a swain,
I only shall think, as they heartily vex me,
Of escaping from those who already perplex me.

MRS. FELIX.

O make yourself easy, I pray, on that head;
In the deepest disgrace the poor Poet is fled,
And I trust that the Critic will soon share his fate.
Come with me—I've a most curious tale to relate.
Let us haste—I perceive that Decisive is near,
In whose present discourse I would not interfere.

[*Exeunt.*]

Enter Decisive and Morley.

DECISIVE.

So while in the grove I was coolly projecting
New plans for the temple the Knight is erecting,

Our

Our Poet, addicted to amorous sin,
 Grew a little too fond of the Ladies within :
 But discovery happen'd his passion to damp ;
 And this is the cause of his haste to decamp.

M O R L E Y.

The old Knight, I believe, such resentment express'd
 As quicken'd the speed of his fugitive guest ;
 On Terror's swift wing he is certainly flown,
 And as he has retreated, the field is your own.

D E C I S I V E.

As a rival I had not much fear of poor Sapphic ;
 Bad rhyme's current coin in most amorous traffic,
 But would not pass here.

M O R L E Y.

I think not in your view,
 As it finds such a critical touchstone in you.
 The Poet's dismissal your triumph ensures,
 And the prize, my good friend, is now certainly yours ;
 A prize, that we justly may call very great,
 A lovely sweet girl with a noble estate.

D E C I S I V E.

The girl's very well, but knows nothing of life ;
 It will cost me some pains to new model my Wife ;

But

But I think she will gladly receive my correction,
And my wealthy old kinsman approves the connection.

(*Coughs.*)

M O R L E Y.

You've a cough, my good friend.

D E C I S I V E.

Yes, a trifling one : *Hem!*

Have you got any Indian prescription for phlegm ?

M O R L E Y.

Believe me, that cough is no trifling affair ;
It calls, I assure you, for caution and care.
With regret I point out so unpleasant a truth,
But your constitution I've known from your youth ;
Your hectic appearance I see with concern,
As I know, with your frame, if health takes such a turn,
The least indiscretion your life may destroy.
The slightest excess in diversion and joy ;
Even those tender cares, which on life's purest plan
Must belong to the state of a Family Man,
May lead to disease from which art cannot save,
And rapidly hurry you into the grave.
'Twere better this courtship of yours should miscarry,
For you'll certainly die in six months if you marry.

D E C I S I V E.

DECISIVE.

Are you serious, dear Doctor?

MORLEY.

By such a sad end

I lately have lost a poor good-humour'd friend.

You remember Jack Dangle at College, no doubt;

He was just of your age, and a little more stout;

He, with other young fages, left Westminster Hall

To teach English law to the slaves of Bengal.

But Jack, in his new chamber-practice at least,

Too eagerly follow'd the rules of the East.

A bad cough ensu'd, much like yours in its sound—

(Decisive coughs.)

Good God! I could swear 'twas poor Jack under
ground,

'Tis his tone so exactly, sepulchral and hollow!

The system he slighted I hope you will follow.

With pains in his breast he was sharply tormented;

But as he at first to my guidance consented,

Some time my strict regimen kept him alive,

Poor Dangle once more was beginning to thrive;

And had he some months in my plan persever'd,

On the earth at this moment he might have appear'd;

But

But chance threw a pretty white girl in his way,
 And eager for marriage, fond Jack would not stay :
 In vain I conjur'd him to wait half a year,
 And shew'd him the danger he ran very clear.
 He thought the remains of his cough but a trifle,
 And, being unable his passion to stifle,
 He took his fair wife ;—but, alas ! the vile cough
 Encreas'd every day till it carried him off !

DECISIVE.

I don't recollect any pain in my breast,
 But I feel a strange tightness just now in my chest.

MORLEY.

How's your stomach ?

DECISIVE.

I've nothing to fear on that score.

MORLEY.

Do you eat as you did ?

DECISIVE.

Yes, I think rather more.

MORLEY.

That ravenous hunger's the thing that I dread.
 How d'ye sleep ?

DECISIVE.

All the time that I pass in my bed.

M O R L E Y.

Indeed !—I don't like so lethargic a slumber.

D E C I S I V E.

Why ! my friend ! of good symptoms these rank in
the number.

M O R L E Y.

Alas ! you may call them all good if you please,
By that title you only confirm your disease,
In which, tho' the patient declines very fast,
He for ever will flatter himself to the last.
Believe me, your symptoms are rather alarming,
Yet your present disorder there is not much harm in,
If you can but abstain, with a spirit resign'd,
From all that may harrafs your body or mind.
To a different climate I wish you'd repair,
And for one winter breathe a less changeable air.
Spend a Christmas at Naples, and when you return
You may marry without any anxious concern.
But you're now at that critical period of life
When, in such frames as yours, nature feels an odd
strife,
And, if quiet does not all her functions befriend,
The short earthly scene on a sudden will end.
On a point so important you'll pardon my freedom.

DECISIVE.

Your cautions oblige me, I feel that I need 'em,
 For in truth I am growing as thin as a rabbit,
 And there's something consumptive I know in my habit.
 My father died soon after taking a wife,
 And cough'd out his soul when I jump'd into life :
 I suppose I am going.

MORLEY.

Take courage, my friend ;
 On your own prudent conduct your life will depend.
 If you take but due care for two years, I'll engage
 You will stand a fair chance for a healthy old age.
 Nor would I advise you this girl to refuse,
 A distant attachment your mind will amuse ;
 And, no doubt, for a man of your fortune and figure
 She will wait till your health has recover'd its vigour.

DECISIVE.

I can part with the girl without feeling a chasm
 In my heart ; that will shake with no amorous spasm ;
 For, to tell you the truth, my old rich Uncle Cob
 Is more eager than I for this marrying job.
 By this scheme the old blade is supremely delighted,
 Because two large manors may thus be united :

But

But when of his park I've extended the bound,
 It will do me small good if I sink under ground ;
 And I'm not such a fool, in these projects of pelf,
 To humour my friends and endanger myself.

M O R L E Y.

Indeed I'd not wed for an old Uncle's whim ;—
 But here comes our Knight, I shall leave you with him,
 As I think you've some delicate points to adjust. [*Exit.*

D E C I S I V E, *alone.*

I'm in no haste to sleep with my Ancestors' dust.
 'Tis wiser my weak constitution to save,
 Than to marry, and so travel post to the grave.

Enter Sir Nicholas.

S I R N I C H O L A S.

Come, give me your hand, and rejoice, my young
 neighbour,
 You're the man that's to order the pipe and the tabor ;
 And by Jove we'll all dance on so joyous a day :
 Your wedding, dear Dick, shall be speedy and gay ;
 For your rival is gone with our serious displeasure,
 And I give to your wishes my young lovely treasure.
 A treasure she is, tho' the girl is my niece ;
 Heaven grant ye long years of affection and peace !

And

And a fine chopping boy ere the end of the first—
Remember that I am to see the rogue nurs'd.
Go, you happy young dog, go and seal with a kiss,
And teach the old hall to re-echoe your blifs.
As I know on this match what Sir Jacob intends,
And we can so well trust each other as friends,
Short contracts will answer as well as the best,
Our lawyers at leisure may finish the rest.
I know all suspense in such cases is hard,
And you shall not, I swear, from your blifs be debarr'd,
While o'er acres of parchment they're crawling like
snails.

DECISIVE.

Dear Sir, upon weighing in Reason's just scales
Your very great favours, and my weak pretension,
I find I'm unworthy of such condescension,
And must, with regret, the high honour resign,
Which I once vainly thought might with justice be
mine.

SIR NICHOLAS.

Hey-day! what does all this formality mean?
Why, Dick! has the Devil possess'd you with spleen?
Or has love made your mind thus with diffidence sore?
False modesty ne'er was your foible before.

You think you're unworthy!—the thought is so new,
 That I hardly can tell what to say or to do.
 If you love the good girl full as much as you said,
 I think you have very just claims to her bed;
 But if your mind's chang'd, and you feel your love lighter,
 'Tis better to say so, than marry and slight her:
 And if this be the case, Sir, you have your release;
 For altho' I am eager to marry my Niece,
 Tho' I'm partial to you, yet I beg you to note,
 That I don't want to cram her down any man's throat.

D E C I S I V E.

I'm truly convinc'd of the Lady's perfection,
 And 'twould please me, dear Sir, to preserve the connection,
 Tho' now, by particular reasons, I'm led
 To revisit the Continent once ere I wed.
 In the time of my absence I can't be exact;
 But in what form you please I will freely contract,
 In the course of two years to receive as my Wife—

S I R N I C H O L A S.

Do you mean to insult me, you puppy? Od's-life!
 Ere I'd tie my dear girl to so silly a fop
 For life, I'd condemn her to trundle a mop.

And let me advise you, young man, for the future,
To know your own mind ere you go as a suitor.

DECISIVE.

I perceive, Sir, my presence grows irksome to you,
And you'll therefore allow me to bid you adieu.

SIR NICHOLAS.

Your departure, indeed, I don't wish to restrain,
And have little concern when I see you again.

[*Exit Decisive.*]

SIR NICHOLAS *alone.*

What can make this pert puppy recede from his suit?
My fair Cousin and he have scarce had a dispute;
She would hardly affront him on purpose to vex me!—
Here she comes to explain all the points that perplex me.

Enter Mrs. Felix.

Well, Cousin, my scheme for a wedding's suspended,
The Beaux are both gone, and their courtship is ended;
With an air so mysterious Decisive withdraws,
I a little suspect you're concern'd as the cause:
Confess, have you had any words with this Youth?

MRS. FELIX.

Not I, my dear Sir, on my honour and truth.
But I'm ready to own, that the news you impart
With surprize and with pleasure enlivens my heart.

I think your sweet Niece has a lucky escape :
 I would almost as soon see her marry an ape
 As her union with one of these coxcombs behold ;
 The Bard is too warm, and the Critic too cold.

SIR NICHOLAS.

I find that they are not such lads as I thought 'em ;
 The world all the worst of its fashions has taught 'em :
 And the world is indeed at a very fine pass,
 When such puppies insult so attractive a lass.
 Young fellows of fortune now think it hard duty
 To pay a chaste homage to Virtue and Beauty.
 But I'll leave these pert fops to their own vile caprice,
 And soon find a much fitter match for my Niece.
 Other orders of men for a husband I'll search,
 And I think I can settle my girl in the Church.

MRS. FELIX.

Lord, Cousin ! I thought you detested the Cloth !

SIR NICHOLAS.

Our Rector, I own, often kindles my wrath ;
 But all Parsons are not like my neighbour, old Squabble,
 Who has learnt from his geese both to hiss and to gobble.
 We have in our neighbourhood three young Divines,
 And each, I believe, to Selina inclines.

Our

Our Bishop's smart nephew deserves a sweet wench,
He himself in due time may be rais'd to the Bench ;
With him I should like very well to unite her ;
And if he hereafter should rise to the Mitre,
Then perhaps we together may bring to perfection
A much-wanted plan for the Church's correction.

MRS. FELIX.

A very fine scheme, which you'll manage, no doubt !

SIR NICHOLAS.

More wonderful things I have known brought about ;
And tho' my first plan, as you see, has miscarried,
I'm resolv'd that my Niece shall be speedily married.
I'll unite the good girl to a Priest, if I'm able ;
For the young Olive Branch never fails at his table.
There is one I prefer—but to leave the girl free,
I allow her to make a fair choice of the three :
I shall therefore invite the whole group to the hall,
And I'll now go and make her write cards to them all.

[Exit.

MRS. FELIX *alone*.

What a wonderful creature is this worthy Knight !
To make others happy is all his delight !
Yet, misled by some wild philanthropic illusion,
He's for ever involv'd in odd scenes of confusion.

'Tis well that our Critic has made his last bow,
I rejoice he's remov'd, and I long to know how.

Enter Morley.

MORLEY.

Thank my stars, my dear Ma'am, I've dispatch'd your
commission ;

Your sweet friend is, I hope, in a tranquil condi-
tion :

From her two irksome lovers she now is reliev'd.

MRS. FELIX.

And I'm dying to know how all this was atchiev'd.
Come tell me, good creature, how could you ef-
fect it ?

MORLEY.

By a project so simple you'd never suspect it :

I have banish'd both swains, by declaring a wife
Would rob one of glory, and t'other of life.

I perswaded the Bard his poetical fame

Could never exist with a conjugal flame :

Hence he grew with your charms so licentiously free,

But forgive me this ill, which I could not foresee.

Decisive, more wisely, abandons the Fair

To make his own lungs his particular care.

MRS.

MRS. FELIX.

What ! on such points as these have they taken your word ?

MORLEY.

Dear Madam ! mankind credit things most absurd,
When they come from the mouth of a medical man ;
Hence Mountebanks never want skill to trepan.
The extent of our empire indeed there's no seeing,
When we act on the fears of a true selfish being.

MRS. FELIX.

How simple soever the means you've employ'd,
You have remedy'd ills by which we were annoy'd.
Having thus clear'd the scene from each troublesome
lover,

Can you not for the nymph a fit husband discover ?
You see how she's prest by her Uncle to wed,
Who ne'er quits a scheme he once takes in his head.—
Suppose her kind fancy should lean towards you,
Is your heart quite as free as I'm sure 'twould be true ?
Is it not pre-engag'd ?

MORLEY.

As in mirth's sportive folly
It pleases you thus a poor pilgrim to rally,

Your good-nature, I know, will forgive me if I
 To your pleasantry make a too serious reply.
 'Tis my maxim to speak, whatsoe'er be the theme,
 With a heart undisguis'd, to the friends I esteem :
 Had I all India's wealth, 'twould be my inclination
 To offer it all to your lovely relation.
 But supposing it possible you could be willing
 To unite her with one who is scarce worth a shilling ;
 Believe me, dear Madam, my pride is too great
 To wish her to stoop to my humble estate.

M R S. F E L I X.

Such pride, tho' it rests upon no strong foundation,
 Is noble, I own, and deserves admiration.
 I call it ill-founded, because, in my mind,
 If there's fortune enough for a couple when join'd,
 If talents and worth are by each duly shar'd,
 If in all other points they are equally pair'd,
 And mutual regard mutual merit enhances,
 It signifies not which supply'd their finances,

M O R L E Y.

Your pardon—how often, when fortune's unequal,
 Gay weddings produce a most turbulent sequel ?
 But could I once hope your sweet Cousin to gain,
 How many things are there such hopes to restrain ?

Suppose

Suppose your dear Colonel, my most noble friend,
Whom success to your arms may more speedily send !
Suppose, having clos'd the bright work he has plan'd,
His return from the East he should hasten by land ;
Suppose him arriv'd, with what face could I meet
The man whom my heart should exultingly greet,
If he found me attempting, in spite of my station,
To wed, tho' a beggar, your wealthy relation ?

MRS. FELIX.

From these words, my dear friend, which I almost
adore,

And a few slighter hints that escap'd you before,
I have caught a quick hope, which is fraught with
delight,

That I soon shall be blest with my Felix's sight :
I begin to suspect he's in England already ;
I perceive that you can't keep your countenance steady.
With his usual attention his love has reflected
How my poor foolish nerves by surprize are affected ;
And, lest they should fail me beyond all revival,
Has sent you to prepare for his wish'd-for arrival.
Am I right in my guess ? Is he not very near ?
Could I trust my own heart, I should think Felix here.

COLONEL

COLONEL FELIX, *entering*.

Sweet foreboder, behold him restor'd to your arms.

MRS. FELIX.

O my Felix † this transport o'er pays all alarms,
Thus to see thee restor'd, and ennobled with fame!
In what words shall affection thy welcome proclaim?

COLONEL.

My Love! my best Treasure! than glory more dear!
The bliss of this meeting, which shines in thy tear,
That we owe to this friend let us never forget.

MORLEY.

My share in your transport o'er pays all the debt.—
But, Colonel, your fondness has travell'd full speed,
And has not allow'd me the time you agreed.

COLONEL.

I meant not, indeed, to have join'd you to-day,
But I found love forbade my intended delay.

MORLEY.

Well, my duty is done, now you happily meet;
Heaven bless you together—

MRS. FELIX.

Stay, stay, I entreat;

You must not go yet; and before you depart
I will open to Felix the scheme of my heart.

SELINA.

SELINA (*behind the scene.*)

Indeed, Sir, I never can write such a card.

SIR NICHOLAS (*behind the scene.*)

Then you'll forfeit at once my paternal regard!

COLONEL.

Hey-day! in the house I much fear something's wrong,
As Sir Nicholas talks in a language so strong.

MRS. FELIX.

Does he know you are here?

COLONEL.

No, my dear, I think not,
Unless he the tidings from Jenny has got;
She alone saw me come, and without much ado
Most kindly directed me where to find you.

MRS. FELIX.

They are coming this way—let's withdraw all together,
And contrive how to turn this loud storm to fair
weather.

[*Exeunt.*]

Enter Sir Nicholas and Selina.

SIR NICHOLAS.

I insist on your writing such cards to them all!

SELINA.

Dear Uncle, I beg you'll this order recall.

You

You know your commands I much wish to obey ;
 But reflect on this matter what people will say :
 You're so eager to marry your Niece, they will swear
 That you hawk her about just like goods at a fair.

SIR NICHOLAS.

Well, my dear, let 'em say so, and I'll say so too,
 For your simile proves what a guardian should do.
 He who wants to dispose of a tender young maid,
 May take a good hint from the gingerbread trade :
 If he has any sense, 'twill be ever his plan
 To part with soft pastry as soon as he can ;
 For egad an old maid is like old harden'd paste,
 You may cry it about, but nobody will taste.
 Come, do as I bid you, and take up your pen.

SELINA.

Lord, Sir ! it will seem very odd to these men ;
 You will make me appear in a horrible light ;
 I vow my hand shakes so, I never can write.
 Excuse me, dear Sir, from this business, pray do,
 And let me live single for ever with you.

SIR NICHOLAS.

All business where woman's concern'd, I believe,
 Must partake of the curse from our grandmother Eve.

All her daughters the steps of their parent have follow'd !

Contradiction, the core of the apple she swallow'd,
In their veins still fermenting new ills can produce,
And all their blood seems coloquintida juice.—

You froward cross baggage ! your word should I take,
And bid you live single five years for my sake,
Of the barbarous Uncle you'd quickly complain,
Who from nature's just right a young girl wou'd
restrain !

SELINA.

Indeed, Sir, I should not.

SIR NICHOLAS.

I tell you you wou'd.
From perverseness alone you oppose your own good.
'Tis only to thwart me, because I desire
To see you well settled before I expire,
That you now, with your soft hypocritical carriage,
Affect to have no inclination to marriage.
But you'll never contrive, tho' your tongue may be
nimble,
To convince me your heart is as cold as your thimble.
I know of what stuff froward damsels are made ;
The guardian must force you, who cannot persuade.

That

That you'll like a good husband, I never can doubt ;
 And married you shall be before the month's out,
 Or at least your kind Uncle no more you shall tease,
 But may e'en go to Rome and turn nun if you please.

SELINA (*aside.*)

I have lost all the love he has shewn me for years ;
 If I strive to reply I shall burst into tears.

SIR NICHOLAS.

Come, answer me, Miss ! will you scribble or not ?

Enter the Colonel, Mrs. Felix, and Morley.

COLONEL.

My worthy old friend, what can make you so hot ?

SIR NICHOLAS.

Ha, Colonel !—you find me a little concern'd—
 But I'm heartily glad you are safely return'd.
 Your arrival indeed is a welcome surprize,
 Tho' before you your fame a bright harbinger flies ;
 We have heard your success, and we all triumph in it.

COLONEL.

I trust I am come in a fortunate minute
 To make all your present embarrassment cease,
 For I bring a young husband, my friend, for your
 Niece.

SIR

SIR NICHOLAS.

Egad, that's well said ; and I'm sure it's well meant ;
And if he's like you he shall have my consent.

COLONEL.

He has many more virtues, and just as much wealth,
And from India brings home both his morals and health.
Here, my friend, is the man.—As I owe him my life,
I wish to present him so lovely a wife ;
Half my fortune is his—here I freely declare it,
And have only to hope that Selina my share it.
I've regarded her long as a child of my own ;
Nor can my affection more truly be shown,
Than by wishing to place the dear girl in the arms
Of the friend whose rare virtues are worthy her charms.

MORLEY.

Dear generous Felix, I'm quite overcome,
Thy bounty is such, it strikes gratitude dumb !

COLONEL.

This was ever, my friend, my most settled intention,
Though my very just purpose I chose not to mention,
From the hope I should find, what I gladly embrace,
A moment from which it may borrow some grace,
When my gift its plain value may rise far above,
By the aid it affords to the wishes of love ;

And

And I own, as a prophet I'm proud of my art,
Now I see the effects of her charms on your heart.

M O R L E Y,

O Felix ! can I thus deprive thy free spirit
Of wealth, the reward of heroical merit ?
Can I the victorious Commander despoil
Of what he has purchas'd with danger and toil ?
Should love and delight on thy present attend,
I could never be happy in robbing a friend.
No, I still must decline—

S I R N I C H O L A S.

My dear boy, say no more ;
You're the match that I never could meet with before.
I have long fought in vain for an heir to my mind,
But all my soul wish'd, in your spirit I find.
You shall *not* rob your friend of a single * Gold Moor,
He can raise heirs enough to inherit his store :
To such men as himself let him haste to give birth,
And with twenty young Felix's garnish the earth.
How trifling soever your fortune may be,
From the Colonel's esteem, and the virtues I see,
I think you as noble a match for my Niece,
As I could, had you brought home a new golden fleece :

* An Indian Coin.

I have

I have money enough, if you're rich in affection.—
 As I always have talk'd of an equal connection,
 My neighbours, perhaps, may suppose my sight dim,
 Or mock my wise choice as a generous whim :
 Let them study with zeal, which I hope may succeed,
 Of their horses and dogs to improve the best breed ;
 A study more noble engrosses my mind,
 To preserve the first points in the breed of mankind :
 On the heart and the soul, as the first points, I dwell,
 In these, my dear Children, you match mighty well ;
 And I think human nature in debt to my care,
 For uniting two mortals who happily pair.

COLONEL.

Your hand, my dear Knight, it is gloriously said !

SIR NICHOLAS.

By Juno, we'll put the young Couple to bed !

We'll have no dull delays.—

MRS. FELIX.

Now what say you, my dear,
 Are these orders for marriage too quick and severe ?

MORLEY.

My amazement and gratitude both are extreme,
 But my voice seems oppress'd in a heavenly dream ;

Though your kindness is greater than language can paint,
I beg this fair hand may be free from constraint.

SIR NICHOLAS.

From constraint !—Gad, if now she affects to demur,
I can tell her my wrath she will so far incur,
She shall go to a convent for life, or at least
Be sent as a venture herself to the East.

SELINA.

My Uncle I long have obey'd, and at present
I cannot complain his commands are unpleasant :
Nay more ; could he place all mankind in my view,
And bid me chuse from them, my choice would be you.

MORLEY.

To this dear declaration my life must reply,
All words are too weak—

SIR NICHOLAS.

The whole earth I defy,
To shew me a scene more delightful than this ;
Dear honest frank Girl, come and give me a kiss ;
Thou'rt the creature of Nature much more than of Art,
And I own thee again as the Child of my heart.

JONATHAN, *entering and speaking to the Colonel.*
There are two chests for you, Sir, just come to the hall.

COLONEL.

A few Indian things for the Ladies—that's all.

Pray,

Pray, Jonathan, pay those who brought them with
this. *(giving money.)*

MORLEY.

My brave lad must share in our general bliss.
Here, Jonathan, if you're to marriage inclin'd,
And can luckily meet with a girl to your mind,
You may marry and settle, as soon as you please;
The Colonel has taken good care of your ease.

JONATHAN.

God bless him, whate'er he is pleas'd to bestow!
I think I have found a kind sweetheart below.

MRS. FELIX.

He has made choice of Jenny;—and I will provide
A fortune, my Friend, for your good-humour'd Bride.

SIR NICHOLAS.

Egad, they shall have my new farm on the hill,
And raise young recruits there as fast as they will.

JONATHAN.

Heaven prosper you all! I will pray for you ever,
And to serve my King still, as I can, I'll endeavour.

[Exit.

SIR NICHOLAS.

Well said, honest Soldier;—we'll have no delay,
Go and tell the old Parson to keep in the way.

COLONEL.

Come with me, fair Cousin, examine my chests;
I long to present you a few bridal vests.

MRS. FELIX, *to* Morley.

As we view with delight the events of to-day,
A fair lesson, my Friend, in your fate we survey;
While, from love to an aged fond parent, with speed
From wealth's open road you most kindly recede,
Heaven sends you that fortune you nobly have flighted,
And your warm filial piety here is requited;
This bright moral truth by your lot is express'd,
They who seek others' bliss, are by Providence blest.

SIR NICHOLAS, *to* Morley.

Here, my worthy young Friend, take and cherish this
Fair,

And, trust me, you'll find her deserving your care;
For although of her sex she may have a small spice,
She'll please you ten times where she vexes you twice;
And happy the man, in this skirmishing life,
Who is able to say half as much of his Wife.

END OF THE FIFTH VOLUME.

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